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Wednesday, 30 May 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Wronecka	(Poland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Eighteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2018/353)

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2367 (2017) (S/2018/359)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Eighteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2018/353)

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2367 (2017) (S/2018/359)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq; Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; and Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/353, which contains the eighteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013), as well as to document S/2018/359, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2367 (2017).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: On 12 May 2018 — within the constitutional time-frame — Iraq held elections for its national Parliament, the Council of Representatives. Prime Minister Haider Al Abadi, after the closing of the polls, noted that the country had held the elections on time, that people had been able to cast their votes and select their representatives freely and safely and that the liberated areas had experienced a free voting process for the first time after the victory of the Iraqi forces and the defeat of Da'esh.

The Secretary-General, on 13 May, congratulated the people of Iraq on the holding of parliamentary elections and stated that, following the military defeat of Da'esh, the elections represented further progress in building a stronger Iraqi democracy. He saluted the tireless efforts of electoral officials, party agents and the security forces in making the elections largely peaceful and orderly.

Following the elections, international partners, including the Governments of Kuwait, Qatar, Iran, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America and the United Kingdom and the European Union, also congratulated the Iraqi people.

The elections, held in a generally calm and stable environment, were marked by a low voter turnout: the Independent High Electoral Commission informed about the participation of 44.5 per cent — just 10.8 million out of 24.3 million eligible voters — a significant decrease in comparison with previous national elections in Iraq after 2003. The new Parliament will also experience a massive turnover; according to the preliminary results, less than 100 of the incumbent members — the total number of which in the current Parliament is over 300 — have secured their place in the new Council of Representatives. The decision by more than half of the voting population not to exercise their democratic right sends a strong signal to the elites ruling the country since 2003. I urge the Iraqi political elites to draw the necessary conclusions on the need for improved representation, justice for all, democratic accountability and good governance, devoid of corruption, a sectarian quota system, nepotism or patronage.

I also urge political leaders to ensure the full participation of women in negotiations on the formation of the next ruling coalition and the Government, and their representation at the highest levels in Iraq's political and decision-making structures in the Parliament and the Government, as pledged by many political leaders in the election campaign.

Following the closing of the polls and the announcement of the preliminary results, many Iraqi political leaders publicly endorsed the electoral process, including the Prime Minister and the President. They continue to urge a timely conduct and conclusion of the complaint process, certification and acceptance of the results, and a speeding-up of the formation of the new Government, within the constitutional timeline and in accordance with relevant legal procedures. Some other political forces and leaders have raised concerns over some of the technical shortfalls encountered with the

electronic vote tabulation devices, as well as reports of fraud and vote rigging, active intimidation of voters, including by some armed formations, and political interference. They have demanded the recount of votes in some governorates, the annulment of results of out-of-country voting and the voting of the internally displaced persons (IDPs), and even fresh elections. Amid questions about the legality of their decisions, including from the Independent High Electoral Commission, on 28 May, the Council of Representatives voted to request the Commission to undertake the manual counting of 10 per cent of the ballot boxes, which could trigger the manual counting of all the ballots in the case of a discrepancy of 25 per cent or more. It also requested cancellation of the out-of-country and IDP voting.

On 24 May, the Council of Ministers decided to form a High Commission to investigate reports and documents pertaining to the elections. The High Commission already referred the Independent High Electoral Commission to the Integrity Commission, a move rejected by the Commission as interference in its independence.

Six Kurdistani parties have questioned the credibility of the electoral process in the Kurdistan region and have been calling for a recount of the votes in the Kurdistan governorates, and even for a reholding of the elections. On the other hand, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan have announced their satisfaction with the outcome of the elections and their intention to start dialogue on coalition-building with political parties in Baghdad.

In Kirkuk governorate — one of several hotspots of complaints — the situation remains volatile, with Turkmen and Arab parties demanding manual recounting of the election results, while the Independent High Electoral Commission has complained that they have obstructed its work.

On 17 May, I called on the Electoral Commission to act expeditiously and seriously address all complaints, including, as necessary, the conduct of a partial manual recount in selected locations, notably in Kirkuk. I stressed the importance of undertaking such measures in full transparency, witnessed by stakeholders, to strengthen confidence in the process. I also called on all political actors to uphold the peace and to remain committed to resolving any electoral disputes through the established legal channels.

We urge the independent electoral management bodies to adjudicate all appeals properly, fully and in time to enable corrections of the problems, justice and the timely certification of the final election results. I also wish to highlight the readiness and availability of United Nations electoral advice and expertise in support of any activities and measures that may be required to retain confidence in the process, including in the light of the forthcoming provincial council elections across Iraq on 22 December and Kurdistan regional elections on 30 September.

Given the controversies around the Council of Representatives elections, the Kurdistan regional Independent High Electoral and Referendum Commission has decided not to use electronic vote tabulation machines. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) stands ready to advise and support that electoral process.

The post-election phase represents a crucial time for Iraq. Building on the achievements of the current Government, we urge political leaders to prioritize inclusive, non-sectarian dialogue and to ensure the swift formation of a new genuinely national Government that reflects the will of the people of Iraq. It is essential that the new Government works as one across the sectarian and ethnic divides in pursuing much-needed political, economic and social reforms, based on the principles of patriotism and citizenship with equal rights, responsibilities, justice and opportunity for all and good governance, while working to improve the economy, public services delivery and social justice. A new Government, based on such an approach, will guarantee the future of Iraq as a stable, prosperous, united, democratic, fully sovereign and independent federal State with good relations with all its neighbours, based on mutual respect, non-interference and common interests as prerequisites for stability, cooperation and prosperity, including in the region.

The humanitarian crisis in Iraq continues. More than 2.1 million people remain displaced and in need of humanitarian assistance. However, the funding to provide the most vulnerable with emergency support is at critically low levels. Out of the required $569 million in the humanitarian response plan, only $101 million in donor contributions — 18 per cent — had been received as of 15 May. In addition, demining and stabilization efforts are underfunded. I therefore appeal to the donor community to further extend its generosity to the people

of Iraq for humanitarian, stabilization, demining and rehabilitation needs.

Despite the Prime Minister's 2017 directive on the civilian character of IDP camps, a continued military presence in camps across Iraq, the sexual harassment of women and girls, the diversion of humanitarian assistance, the detention and disappearance of their residents, recruitment activities inside the camps and attacks by armed actors on humanitarian staff remain deeply concerning. In April Amnesty International issued a report that concluded that Iraqi women and children with perceived ties to Da'esh experience serious protection issues in camps, including the denial of assistance, restrictions on freedom of movement and sexual harassment, rape and sexual exploitation. I wish to underline that the United Nations in Iraq, in cooperation with the Government, has been engaged, notably through the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse network, established in 2016, in an urgent follow-up on reported situations.

With regard to the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, in April, for the second time in 15 years, Iraq hosted meetings of the tripartite mechanism, demonstrating its commitment to the missing persons file and a steady return to normality. I am grateful for the positive response received with regard to the proposals put forward by UNAMI during those meetings, namely, a pilot project to conduct mass grave site surveys in Iraq with the help of the United Nations Global Service Centre in Brindisi.

I would like to call upon the Member States in possession of relevant satellite imagery from 1990 and 1991 to come forward and provide analysis and information to the Government of Iraq that could assist in the identification of burial locations. The missing Kuwaiti property file also did not register any direct progress during the period under review. UNAMI has been meeting with the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss how best it can support and facilitate the repatriation of already located Kuwaiti property, which has been pending for more than a year.

The President: I thank Mr. Kubiš for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Voronkov.

Mr. Voronkov (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to thank the Polish presidency for convening today's meeting. It is an extremely important one. Using Iraq as an example, we will be discussing how coordinated efforts within the United Nations system generate speedy and positive results.

(*spoke in English*)

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I would like to start by expressing my solidarity with the peoples and the Governments of countries where terrorist attacks were recently perpetrated. Regrettably, the list is a long one and includes Afghanistan, Belgium, France, Indonesia, Iraq, Libya and Nigeria. Our prayers are with the victims and the survivors of those heinous attacks. I also call upon all Member States to redouble their efforts to strengthen international cooperation to address terrorism in a comprehensive manner and bring those responsible to justice.

I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the joint visit to Iraq we conducted with Ms. Michèle Coninsx in March. The visit was conducted within the framework of the common efforts of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to facilitate the delivery of counter-terrorism-related technical assistance to Member States in accordance with resolution 2395 (2017). In that resolution the Council underscored the need for the two United Nations entities to work closely together.

The visit took place at the invitation of the Government of Iraq and with the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, for which I am grateful. I am honoured to have the opportunity to brief the Council today alongside my colleagues CTED Executive Director Madame Michèle Coninsx and Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), as well as Permanent Representative of Iraq, Ambassador Bahr Aluloom.

Iraq has been affected by, and is suffering severely from, the consequences of terrorism. The military setback of Da'esh clearly demonstrates the long-term resolve of the Iraqi authorities in their fight against terrorism. The continued vigilance and determination of the Iraqi Government to consolidate the military victory against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) through a comprehensive approach focused on both prevention and resilience is of the utmost importance. In that regard, I would like to stress the continued commitment of Iraq in addressing the 16

recommendations made by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001), concerning counter-terrorism, on advancing Iraq's efforts to implement key counter-terrorism priorities.

During our joint mission with CTED to Iraq, we were able to hold high-level consultations with a number of ministers and senior officials. In order to understand better the realities on the ground, we visited Fallujah to discuss the additional support the United Nations could provide to the local population.

All our interlocutors stressed Iraq's continued commitment to fighting terrorism as it transitions from a military-focused counter-terrorism approach to a more comprehensive one, which also includes preventive, law enforcement and criminal justice components. It was the conclusion of our Iraqi interlocutors that national reconciliation and reconstruction, owned and driven by the Iraqi people, are essential to prevent the resurgence of violent extremism and terrorism in Iraq. I would like to express my words of appreciation for that particular approach.

During our visit to Fallujah, we had an opportunity to meet with the mayor of the town and a number of survivors. We witnessed the large-scale devastation caused by ISIL. I was personally touched by the admirable resilience of the Iraqi people while observing the reconstruction work in areas surrounded by mine fields and booby traps, and the faces of the young people studying in rehabilitated school premises.

Our joint delegation reiterated the United Nations strong support for Iraq. Based on the priority needs identified during the mission and on resolution 2395 (2017), the Office of Counter-Terrorism, together with CTED, proposed five areas in which it could provide technical assistance to Iraq: first, advice for the development of a comprehensive national counter-terrorism strategy; secondly, training in countering the financing of terrorism; thirdly, the prevention of violent extremism through youth skills development and vocational training, including for youth in Fallujah; fourthly, the prevention of violent extremism through strategic communications; and, finally, capacity-building to prevent and respond to weapons of mass destruction-related terrorism.

In order to advance our fruitful dialogue and in consultation with the Government of Iraq and UNAMI, we were able to dispatch a joint Office of Counter-Terrorism-CTED scoping mission to Iraq at the beginning of May to identify the specific elements of programmatic support under the five priorities I mentioned. The scoping mission held meetings with a range of Iraqi ministries and national agencies, the diplomatic community, as well as the United Nations country team and the World Bank. Based on the findings of the scoping mission, the Office of Counter-Terrorism is now working on the development of project concept notes on the priority thematic topics. The projects could have a measurable impact on the ground, while avoiding duplication with existing initiatives. The Office of Counter-Terrorism is also planning to deploy a consultant to support Iraq in finalizing its national counter-terrorism strategy. The practical implementation of those projects, in consultation with the Government of Iraq, will start next month. We took a total of three months to go from the initial stages to the start of project implementation.

As the Secretary-General has often emphasized, the Office of Counter-Terrorism is committed to delivering on key counter-terrorism capacity-building priorities of Member States, as one United Nations, in a coordinated and coherent manner, and as requested by Member States. Our first joint Office of Counter-Terrorism-CTED mission to Iraq, in collaboration with UNAMI, was a concrete step in that direction. We plan to further build on that approach in other regions of the world.

The President: I thank Mr. Voronkov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Coninsx.

Ms. Coninsx: It is my great honour and pleasure to address the Security Council today alongside Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq. It was indeed a joint and historic visit, and I can only agree with what was said by Under-Secretary-General Voronkov in his briefing to the Council.

I wish to begin by conveying my deepest respect for the Government and the people of Iraq for their continued determination to overcome the challenge of terrorism and for their true resilience. I also wish to express my continued and unwavering support for all the victims of terrorism in Iraq, as well as their families.

The Under-Secretary-General and I were able to witness at first-hand the remarkable determination of the Iraqi people, in both Baghdad and Fallujah, during our recent high-level consultations with the Iraqi Government. As Mr. Voronkov just mentioned, in Fallujah there was a moment where we had to stand still, look at the class of young students ,with their one female teacher, in a newly built school in the middle of rubble and debris. That was the best sign of the resilience of the population of that small town. It also demonstrated the need to give those children what they deserve: the right to development, education, hope and perspective. It motivated us greatly.

The consultations were conducted in accordance with the respective mandates of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), and within the framework of the strengthened coordination between the two Offices called for by the Council in resolution 2395 (2017). Our discussions focused in part on the facilitation and provision of tailored capacity-building assistance to Iraq, on the basis of the priority needs identified by the Committee in accordance with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

I would also like to thank the Iraqi authorities, especially the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations for his instrumental role. I thank the Iraqi authorities for the hospitality extended to us during our visit, as well as for their continued willingness to engage in constructive dialogue with us on a broad range of issues.

I now wish to inform the Council about the recent efforts of CTED to assist Iraq in the area of counter-terrorism. Acting on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), CTED conducted an assessment visit to Iraq in September 2015. The visit report was endorsed by the Iraqi Government in March 2016, and subsequently adopted by the Committee. At that time, Iraq's response to the terrorist threat was primarily military in nature.

In an effort to assist Iraq to combat terrorism in non-military areas as well, particularly in the post-conflict phase, CTED identified — as was mentioned previously — 33 key recommendations on ways to strengthen an overall response. While recognizing that Iraq had the capacity to implement several of those recommendations, the Committee nonetheless noted that Iraq would benefit from receiving technical assistance in half of the recommendations, 16 priority areas. Those areas included legal and judicial matters, counter-financing of terrorism, law enforcement and border control, and countering radicalization and incitement to commit terrorist acts.

The 16 priority needs were identified on the basis of CTED's long-term dialogue and partnership with Iraqi counter-terrorism officials. They were formulated in accordance with the international best codes and practices of our partner organizations, including INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and others.

In follow-up to the visit, we have endeavoured to make the findings of the visit accessible to as many donors and implementing partners as possible. In that context, we might say that our approach has been unique. For the first time since its establishment, the Committee held two informal meetings on Iraq for donors and partners, in March 2016 and May 2017, respectively. The meetings enabled the Committee to follow up on progress achieved since the 2015 visit and to take stock of recent developments and continued challenges. That approach has also since been emulated with regard to Afghanistan.

Since the two informal meetings, CTED has returned to Iraq on several occasions in an effort to ensure that the discussions held at Headquarters continued to reflect the situation on the ground. The various activities have been organized in close cooperation with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and have involved Iraqi Government officials, representatives of the donor community, international and regional organizations and various United Nations entities.

The focus of our efforts has been on facilitating the integration of the Committee's recommendations into the existing planned programmes of our implementing partners. We are determined to ensure that our partnership with the Iraqi Government is complemented by close cooperation with UNAMI and that our work on counter-terrorism is fully complementary with UNAMI's overall mandate. I wish to thank the Iraqi Government for its continued commitment to the process. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Special Representative and his entire team for their invaluable cooperation.

Throughout our engagement with Iraq, whether in New York, Baghdad or Fallujah, Iraq has retained full ownership — I think it is really important to underline this point — of the assistance, facilitation and delivery process and has continued to endorse the 16 identified priority areas. Our implementing partners and organizations have also continued to share and update information concerning their current and planned efforts, areas in which they continue to require financial support and areas in which they might be able to partner with other implementing agencies and stakeholders. All this information is entered into a matrix that is designed to ensure full transparency for our partners in Iraq, New York and the relevant capitals. The process helps us not only to avoid duplication and overlap, but also to develop new partnerships.

An example in that regard was our recent facilitation of a legislative drafting workshop organized by the Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC. The workshop led to the development of draft counter-terrorism legislation that has been submitted to the Iraqi National Counter-Terrorism Committee for subsequent consideration and adoption by the Parliament. I wish to reiterate the need for Iraq to actively manage the adoption of counter-terrorism legislation in accordance with the relevant international standards, in order to ensure that the perpetrators of terrorist acts are brought to justice in accordance with human rights and the rule of law.

The Counter-terrorism Committee is currently considering ways to strengthen its assessment process and follow-up mechanisms, pursuant to paragraph 9 of resolution 2395 (2017). I firmly believe that the example of CTED's engagement with Iraq will be very useful to the Committee's work in that area. I am absolutely convinced that this historic joint visit and the follow-up that was recently organized by the Office of Counter-Terrorism,with the participation of CTED, will be a good example to follow.

We are grateful for the continued efforts of all implementing partners that have helped Iraq to achieve such encouraging progress in implementing some of the Committee's priority recommendations. We urge them to continue their efforts and to encourage other partners to join with the Committee, CTED and the Iraqi Government in their efforts to strengthen Iraq's counter-terrorism capacities in the areas identified by the Committee.

I wish to assure the Council that CTED will continue, in close cooperation with the Under-Secretary-General's Office, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and UNAMI, to engage closely with its implementing partners to determine the most effective ways to support Iraq. At the end of the day, it is only a question of transparency, accountability and impact. The joint visit was certainly historic in its approach, and I firmly hope that it will also be historic in its results and impact and that we finally honour all of the victims of the past in Iraq and that we avoid future victims there and in the rest of the world.

The President: I thank Ms. Coninsx for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I would like to thank the briefers for their statements. I especially want to express our gratitude to Mr. Kubiš, for his three years of service in leading the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) through what has been a very challenging period.

Just three years ago, Iraq was in a very different place. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) controlled Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, and it captured territory stretching to within 30 minutes of Baghdad. ISIS fighters were committing unspeakable atrocities against Iraqis, including selling women into sexual slavery and murdering religious minorities. They were using their safe haven to plan attacks against the West.

But that was three years ago. Today Iraq is liberated. With the support of the United States and other coalition allies, Iraqis have taken their country back. Displaced persons are returning to their homes and beginning to rebuild. Most importantly, Iraqis have successfully conducted national parliamentary elections. Iraqi security forces went from taking territory back from ISIS to protecting polling places in just a few short months.

Government-formation talks are already under way. This is a key moment in Iraqi history. Iraq's next Government is going to make a series of important decisions that will set Iraq's course for decades to come. It will fall to Iraq's next Government to decide whether to truly value diversity and create opportunities for all of Iraq's people, including some of Iraq's most vulnerable citizens, in towns and villages far from

Baghdad. The next Government will have to decide whether Iraq is serious about elevating female leaders, and it will be responsible for governing inclusively. That means setting policies that allow Iraq to close the door on the extremism and the sectarian politics that have caused so much suffering before.

Iraq's next Government has its work cut out for it. Bold leadership will be required. Government formation is a challenging process, but once it is complete, the United States will stand ready to support Iraq as it continues moving towards a more peaceful and prosperous future. As Iraq emerges from the shadow ISIS terror, the Government has to focus on getting the basics right. Keeping the lights on and paving roads may seem like small steps, but delivering such services will be essential for the credibility of the new Iraqi Government. It will also be vital for the Government to respect and promote human rights. Especially after the crimes of ISIS, Iraqis must be confident that their leaders will uphold the rule of law and pursue accountability for atrocities. One important part of that effort will be the work carried out by the United Nations and Iraq under resolution 2379 (2017) to collect evidence of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide by ISIS. That collaboration could serve as a model on how to achieve justice throughout Iraq.

There is no question that Iraq is in a tough neighbourhood. Surrounded by serious threats, Iraq must be a force for stability in the region. The United States looks forward to a partnership with the next Iraqi Government that will allow us to address these threats, combat terrorism and strengthen the independence of Iraq's institutions. Just as Iraq is starting a new chapter, the United Nations and its Mission in Iraq must adapt too.

Last year, the Security Council requested that the United Nations carry out external assessment of UNAMI. The review team came back with a long list of recommendations. Many are quite technical, but they add up to an important vision for reform, one that would make UNAMI more efficient and better at coordinating among the many different United Nations agencies that operate on the ground. Now the responsibility falls to the Secretary-General to fully carry out the recommendations and keep the Council informed on the progress made on them. The United States will closely follow that progress.

This month we will also launch the most substantial review by the Security Council of the UNAMI mandate in years. The new mandate will be more focused, responsive to the needs of the Iraqi people and tailored to address the current challenges in Iraq. The United Nations must target the areas where Iraq needs the greatest support, such as political reconciliation, the delivery of humanitarian aid and support to Government institutions to provide basic services.

Iraq's achievements in defeating ISIS and carrying out elections deserve our collective recognition and praise. Iraq has taken major strides towards a more stable, secure and democratic future. Now Iraq's leaders have the hard task of assembling their Government and showing that they can deliver on the high expectations of their people. The United States will be ready to support Iraq in achieving that goal.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov and Ms. Michèle Coninsx for their briefings. I commend the efforts of the United Nations in providing advice and assisting the people and the Government of Iraq, in accordance with resolution 2367 (2017), through the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). We renew our support to Mr. Kubiš and we commend his efforts at the helm of UNAMI. We also renew our support to the efforts of his Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs, Ms. Alice Walpole, especially when it comes to determining the fate of Kuwaiti and third-party nationals who went missing, including as well the missing Kuwaiti national archives, which are part of Kuwait's important heritage, pursuant to Council resolution 2107 (2013).

We congratulate Iraq on the successful holding of parliamentary elections in mid-May, which took place in a democratic and transparent environment across the country, thereby reflecting the high national spirit in Iraq, in line with the Constitution and international democratic standards. We hope that those positive signs will be put to use in order to form the new Iraqi Government. We also hope that Iraq will be able to create a national consensus Government that can meet the aspirations of its people and establish security, growth and prosperity for this brotherly country.

At the same time, we recognize that this year is crucial for Iraq, especially with regard to restoring security and stability and moving forward with reconstruction. We congratulate the Government and

the people of Iraq for fully liberating their land from the control of Da'esh terrorists. Iraq is starting a new phase that requires continued international support and solidarity if it is to confront security, political, humanitarian and economic challenges. We have sought to alleviate those drastic conditions given the suffering of the Iraqi people. Consequently, in mid-February, we organized the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq. It was a successful conference with broad international participation to allow for the start of the reconstruction phase and the return of internally displaced persons. We have great hope for the future, security and stability of Iraq, which in turn are an integral part of the security and stability of the region as a whole.

Regarding the international commitments and the remaining humanitarian issues related to missing Kuwaitis and third-party nationals and Kuwait's national archives, we continue to follow the matter closely through the Secretary-General's reports and the briefings of the Special Representative, pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 2107 (2013). We are disappointed at the lack of progress on that front despite efforts made in exploration and excavation, as well as getting further information on possible burial sites.

We share the Secretary-General's disappointment that there is no information or evidence so far about the national Kuwaiti archives. These are highly sensitive issues that are related to building confidence between Kuwait and Iraq. We look forward to adopting a new approach in order to settle these matters and achieve the required outcome, including through the Technical Sub-committee of the Tripartite Commission, headed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). We welcome the steps taken by the ICRC to achieve further progress. However, those ongoing efforts are not sufficient to make significant progress on the ground in order to end the suffering of the families of the missing people, which has been going for more than 27 years. That requires further commitment and determination.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the Republic of Iraq, as our two countries seek to settle problems and build relationships based on the fundamentals of good neighbourly relations and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations. The State of Kuwait will spare no effort to assist Iraq in all areas in order for the country to overcome all its challenges. We hope that all commitments will be fulfilled according to the relevant Security Council resolutions, for we believe in the need to support the Iraqi people to achieve security, stability and peace so as to help Iraq regain its status and position regionally and internationally.

We commend UNAMI's efforts and endeavours in that regard. We will continue our full cooperation with UNAMI in order to execute its mandate to the fullest.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, Ms. Michèle Coninsx, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Mr. Ján Kubiš, for their briefings. My delegation also acknowledges the outstanding role being played by UNAMI in the carrying out of its mandate. We encourage UNAMI to continue advancing dialogue and coordination for bolstering the peace process and reconciliation in Iraq.

We highlight the holding of parliamentary elections on 12 May, which were conducted in an orderly way in a violence-free environment. We call on the elected representatives and the political actors concerned to dialogue and enter into negotiations that will enable them to establish continuous governance and develop solid institutions that will take the necessary measures for the stabilization and rebuilding of Iraq.

We also note the progress made in the establishment of a State-owned oil company under the supervision of the Council of Ministers. We are convinced that the sovereign administration of those resources will be of great help for the rebuilding of Iraq and the restoration of basic services for the people in general.

We also encourage ongoing dialogue between the federal Government and the regional Government of Kurdistan in order to peacefully resolve pending issues, since it was through dialogue that the Erbil and Sulaymaniyah airports were reopened to international traffic and federal resources were allocated to pay public servants in Kurdistan. As such, we call on both parties to continue to work together on a consensual basis to address and resolve common issues.

Despite the progress made, we regret the continuation of asymmetrical attacks that claim the lives

of innocent civilians. During the reporting period, at least 170 people were killed and 300 injured, including women and children. It is important to highlight that a significant number of those victims occurred as a result of the detonation of improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war.

In that regard, we highlight the work carried out by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), which, during the reporting period, identified and removed almost 500 explosive devices deployed in different parts of Iraq's territory. The clearing and removal of explosive remnants of war is essential, as the security of the population is essential to beginning the process of reconstruction in Iraq. We therefore call upon the international community to support the work of UNMAS and unite efforts to effectively implement resolution 2365 (2017).

Noting the efforts spearheaded by Iraq to identify mass graves and patrimonial goods, such as those belonging to Kuwait, my delegation commends the convening of the meeting of the tripartite mechanism in April in Iraq. To that end, we call upon the international community to lend its support for the capacity-building that the Iraqi Government requires to move forward in the search and identification of possible areas where mass graves might be located.

The declaration of victory made as a result of Prime Minister Al Abadi's campaign to free Iraq from the control of Da'esh 9 December last year is an important achievement not only for Iraq but for the entire international community. However, the presence of that terrorist group — which still has the capacity to coordinate and perpetrate attacks against the civilian population and law enforcement agencies, such as those carried out earlier this month in Baghdad and Kirkuk — continues to pose a major threat to the security of the population and to the process of reconstruction and reconciliation in Iraq. Also, the plight of more than 1,500 Yazidi women and girls still under the control of Da'esh remains a concern that must be resolved as soon as possible.

In that regard, we welcome the visit made by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to Iraq in March and reiterate the need to develop the capacities of Iraqi institutions to eliminate that threat once and for all by, inter alia, strengthening the fight against terrorism financing, countering terrorist narratives and focusing on educating young people to prevent extremism. The effective implementation of resolution 2354 (2017) on narratives and arguments for the fight against terrorism is a useful tool in the areas of prevention and combating extremist rhetoric. In that understanding, the commencement of the tasks entrusted by resolution 2379 (2017) to the investigative team to identify those responsible for the atrocities committed by Da'esh is of vital importance in bringing those persons before Iraqi courts to account for their criminal acts, as an essential element to fight impunity and indemnify the victims.

We reiterate our sincere appreciation for the courageous, self-sacrificing and determined fight against terrorism that the Iraqi security forces, and the Iraqi people as a whole, have waged on behalf of all of us. That significant achievement must be reinforced by all sectors of society coming together in unity. To that end, the role of political actors and the Government must focus on eliminating sectarian or divisive rhetoric and calling for unity and reconciliation in order to pave the way for the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq.

Finally, we cannot but recall that one of the root causes of the long-lasting conflict that affected Iraq is the consequence of implementing regime-change policies and carrying out interventionist practices in the internal affairs of States, bringing with it the emergence of chaos, terrorism and militarization, the regrettable results of which continue to be replicated to date.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We commend the convening of this meeting, and thank Mr. Ján Kubiš for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in Iraq and for the valuable work he carries out with his team. We particularly appreciate the briefings delivered by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov and Ms. Michèle Coninsx.

Peru congratulates the Government and the people of Iraq on the successful holding of democratic parliamentary elections. We would also like to highlight the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to that end, especially in facilitating the participation of internally displaced persons. We believe, however, that it is important that the special electoral commission be able to respond to the complaints raised about the process, primarily in the city of Kirkuk, as soon as possible. We encourage and look forward to the early formation and establishment of the new Government, which should form a unified

and strong front to address the threats still facing Iraqi society, especially terrorism. We must express our concern about the presence of Da'esh remnants in Iraq. We condemn the recent attacks in Baghdad on civilians and during Ramadan.

We highlight the recent visit to the country by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) Executive Directorate to assess Iraqi capacities and needs. Based on the work of the (CTC), we encourage greater coordination and complementarity by the United Nations system in its support for the efforts of Member States in the fight against terrorism. In that regard, we welcome the decision of the Iraqi authorities to share the assessment of their requests for technical assistance, with a view to guiding cooperating partners towards projects for the prevention, investigation and prosecution of terrorism, thereby promoting synergy and complementarity. We underline the need to utilize a regional approach, in particular on the challenge posed by foreign terrorist fighters.

We believe that the international community's support for Iraq should also be directed towards the reconstruction and revival of its economy. The International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, held in Kuwait in February, is an important step in that direction. We encourage the new Government to promote policies and programmes of assistance and social development aimed at addressing the root causes of violent extremism. In that regard, we wish to join the Secretary-General's call for international support for the Iraq recovery and resilience programme.

We consider it urgent to prioritize addressing the issue of the nearly 9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, including the 2 million displaced persons registered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in April. We also encourage the promotion of greater participation by women and young people in the political, economic and social spheres. We support the recommendations made by UNAMI and UN-Women in that regard, including the strengthening of the intersectoral working group of the national plan of action and its adequate funding.

I will conclude by highlighting the work of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kubiš and his team. My country will continue to closely follow the Iraqi process, especially at this crucial time to move the country towards sustainable peace.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I welcome the insightful update delivered by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and his important contribution to the Security Council's deliberations. Kazakhstan highly values the efforts of UNAMI and the United Nations system to provide critical services to the population of Iraq amid grave and challenging threats and in promoting political dialogue and reconciliation among the parties. At the same time, we are also grateful for the briefings provided by Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Director Michèle Coninsx.

Kazakhstan strongly condemns the attack by two suicide bombers that took place in Baghdad on 15 May, which killed at least 35 people and injured 90 others in an attack on a square where daytime labourers gather to look for work. We consider that attack hideous and cowardly, showing little respect for human life or the holy month of Ramadan.

Kazakhstan congratulates the leadership and the people of Iraq for the successful parliamentary elections held on 12 May. Following the military defeat of Dae'sh, the elections represent further progress in building a stronger Iraqi democracy. With those encouraging results, we call on all Iraqi political actors and their supporters to uphold peace as the results are processed. We furthermore urge political actors to resolve any electoral disputes through the established legal channels and to complete the electoral process by forming an inclusive Government as soon as possible. The world community should remain committed to supporting the Government and the people of Iraq in that endeavour.

The successful operations of the Iraqi Government against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have been commended by all and are greatly appreciated. It is obvious that we must enhance the effectiveness of counter-terrorism mechanisms in Iraq and strengthen security measures at the borders following the expulsion of ISIL from Iraq. We would be glad to see Iraq join Kazakhstan's initiative on a code of conduct for achieving a world without terrorism. The international community must make every effort to consolidate stability and restore peace in Iraq after the expulsion of ISIL.

Kazakhstan is in favour of preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq as a State. There can be no lasting consolidation of peace efforts without bringing about reconciliation among the parties, together with justice and the rule of law throughout the country.

We underscore the inadmissibility of extrajudicial acts of retaliation against the supporters of ISIL, their family members and those with any connection to the group. We urge the Iraqi authorities to take urgent measures to bring perpetrators to justice, while upholding international law and international human rights law, and to refrain from actions that violate human freedom and justice. We were deeply shocked by the fate of 42-year-old housewife Amina Hassan, a Turkish woman who had two minutes to defend herself against charges of supporting the Islamic State. We have learned that the entire trial lasted just 10 minutes, before the judge sentenced her to death by hanging. Approximately 14 death sentences were handed out in a span of two hours to those accused of supporting the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, together with the sentencing of workers, wives and bystanders.

At the same time, we support measures to achieve the most critical goals in Iraq, which are, preserving unity, re-establishing stability and fostering peaceful coexistence among all segments of the population, including minorities. That commonly accepted approach should be based on equal rights and justice for all citizens. The challenge for Iraq now is to uphold the paramount principles of good democratic governance with deep, stable foundations.

Finally, we must support without hesitation the Special Representative's efforts to bring about a stable, post-ISIL Iraq with a new vision.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Republic of Poland on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to express my gratitude for its efforts in organizing the Council's work. I also thank the Republic of Peru for its efforts during its presidency of the Council last month. I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Mr. Ján Kubiš, for his briefing and to express my gratitude to him and his team for their hard and sincere work. I also would like to thank Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Assistant Secretary-General of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, for their briefings.

On 12 May, Iraqis went to the voting polls to elect the members of the Council of Representatives. Those elections were particularly important because they came on the heels of the defeat of Da'esh terrorist gangs in Iraq, which means that the 2018 Iraqi elections were another chapter of the war against terrorism in Iraq.

The large and unprecedented participation by female candidates in the elections for the Iraqi Council of Representatives was a positive sign and showed that Iraqi women have begun to prove themselves on the political scene. A large number of young people also participated in the elections as both voters and candidates, and, in doing so, sought to choose who would represent them and meet their expectations in the Parliament.

The Government of Iraq, based on its legal and constitutional duties, was able to provide a secure electoral environment, which enabled the various Iraqi segments of society to cast their votes in a safe and satisfactory manner. The Government also ensured all the conditions necessary to allow displaced persons to cast their votes, and thereby contribute to consolidating the democratic process in the country.

After the announcement of the election results, the Independent High Electoral Commission allowed complaints and appeals to be submitted by political entities and parties that had any observations or doubts about the results of the elections. The Commission will examine and audit those appeals in accordance with the rules and legal standards provided for by law in order for the Commission to then announce the final results and submit the names of the winners to the Federal Court for formal approval and adoption. The Council of Ministers and the Council of Representatives also focused on that matter so as to reassure all stakeholders.

During the next phase, Iraq will focus on revitalizing its economy and restoring normal social conditions. It will seek to support development and stability in all provinces and to create an attractive climate for investment in line with the approach taken by the previous Government. Iraq will also seek to implement the following strategies.

First, we will work to implement the strategic reconstruction plan, which will be a platform for launching projects in accordance with certain criteria and priorities that take into consideration the requirements for achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, as well as Iraq's vision for 2030.

Secondly, we will carry out the 2018-2022 National Strategy to Alleviate Poverty in Iraq with a view to significantly reducing overall poverty and creating more jobs and opportunities for young people.

Thirdly, the recovery and resilience programme launched by Secretary-General António Guterres consists of nine elements, three of which are to be implemented in high-priority communities where extremism is more likely to take root.

Fourthly, our national youth strategy, which was launched in cooperation with the United Nation Population Fund and is the first of its kind in the country, aims at preparing a generation that is productive and well educated, enjoys good mental, social and psychological health, maintains its national identity, plays a pivotal role in local communities and is immune to radical terrorist ideologies.

The Da'esh terrorist organization has shown extraordinary cruelty towards its victims, including men, women and children.

The Security Council's adoption of resolution 2379 (2017) was a victory for justice and fairness for the victims. The implementation of the resolution is currently under way, including procedures to set up the international investigative team. The team will be responsible for collecting evidence of crimes committed by Da'esh terrorist gangs and submitting it to the national judiciary in order to punish criminals. Iraq looks forward to cooperating fully and constructively with the investigative team.

Iraq will continue its efforts to provide redress and compensation to all the victims of horrendous crimes of sexual violence. It will involve women in all peacebuilding, reconciliation and reconstruction initiatives. We reaffirm our commitment to addressing the suffering of the victims of conflict-related sexual violence, which was made clear through the signing of the 2016 joint communiqué by the United Nations and Iraq to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence, and the endorsement of the implementation plan of the joint communiqué, which outlines specific measures on justice, accountability and services. The signing took place during the latest visit to Iraq by Ms. Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, upon an invitation from the Government, between 26 February and 5 March. Iraq looks forward to concrete outcomes from the implementation plan and a timetable for its assessment.

Iraq also issued the Iraqi national report on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on 7 March, on the occasion of International Women's Day, which will be presented to the United Nations. Iraq will be the first country in the Middle East to report on the implementation of the resolution with regard to the role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Iraqi authorities received Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Assistant Secretary-General of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, during their joint visit to Iraq on 7 and 8 March. The visit yielded fruitful results, including continued efforts to meet Iraq's 16 priorities set by the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate in 2015 and the implementation of capacity-building projects to meet five of the 16 priorities. They include developing skills among youth through capacity-building in vocational and technical training institutes in Baghdad and Fallujah, supporting the development of a comprehensive national strategy to combat terrorism, combating the financing of terrorism through the most effective national and regional action plan, combating terrorist discourse through capacity-building for strategic communications and preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq has established normal and balanced relations with all neighbouring countries and the with region to safeguard the interests of the Iraqi people on the basis of respect for sovereignty, mutual interests and the quest for common denominators, instead of conflicts that have destroyed the region. Iraq seeks to build a new foreign policy based on positive neutrality, while avoiding siding with one side against another. It is in Iraq's interest to stay away from conflicts in the region. Iraq believes that cooperation, partnership and mutual interests in various areas is the only way to achieve the aspirations of our people for security, stability and development, by enhancing political, security, economic and trade cooperation.

Iraq looks forward to building genuine and strategic partnerships based on the principle of integration with friendly and allied countries to help Iraq create a sound economic investment environment and thousands of job opportunities for young people and improve the living conditions and standards of its citizens. Development in Iraq is linked to the development of the entire region and of all its neighbours. It should be recalled that Iraq as a whole, and due to the war against terrorism, suffered from a decline in sustainable development. There are considerable opportunities for investment in all Iraqi provinces.

My country's Government has sought to fulfil the obligations related to outstanding issues between Iraq and the sisterly State of Kuwait. With regard to the issue of Kuwaiti missing persons, the competent Iraqi authorities continue to conduct their research and investigation. According to witness testimony, they have begun exploration and excavation processes in Shakhat and Ain Tamr in Karbala, Salman Pak in Baghdad, Khamisiyah in Dhi Qar, Salman Road in Muthanna and Al-Razi Street in Diyala. No remains have been found. The Iraqi Government is in the process of handing over the first recently found batch of Kuwaiti property and archives, following an agreement with UNAMI. The material will be transported to the State of Kuwait by air.

Lastly, I am pleased to highlight Iraq's willingness to extend the mandate of UNAMI for an additional year, according to the letter of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to Secretary-General António Guterres, on 3 May. That is in accordance with the letter and spirit of resolution 1770 (2007), as well as the political mandate of the Mission, which has the ability to meet Iraq's needs in the post-victory period over Da'esh with a view to extending State authority across the country. Given the challenges faced by Iraq, UNAMI's mandate must remain as is in order to allow it to meet its commitments and provide advice and assistance to the Government and the people of Iraq, in particular on social and economic issues that affect the lives of Iraqi citizens. Iraq hopes that UNAMI and all the relevant United Nations agencies in Iraq will play a major role in rebuilding the country following the devastation caused by the war and the subsequent decline in basic services infrastructure, especially to restore stability in liberated areas and ensure the return of internally displaced persons.

In conclusion, I would like to clarify that the current criminal trials in Iraq cannot be concluded in minutes, as stated by my colleague the representative of Kazakhstan. Legal and judicial processes require that the investigating judge conduct a full investigation over an extended period before the case is referred to another judge, who will then adjudicate on the matter, according to Iraqi law.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8272

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8272nd meeting

Wednesday, 30 May 2018, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Wronecka	(Poland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Israel to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Maldenov is joining this meeting via video tele-conference from Jerusalem.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Mladenov.

Mr. Mladenov: I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the unfolding events in and around Gaza.

I am afraid that the past two days have seen the most serious escalation since the 2014 conflict between Hamas and Israel, and they have shown all of us how close we are to the brink of war every day. Between 28 and 30 May, according to the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), 216 projectiles, rockets and mortar shells were fired from Gaza towards Israel, approximately 77 of which hit areas in the Eshkol, Sha'ar Hanegev and Sdot Negev regions. Although most of the projectiles were intercepted by the Iron Dome system, one hit a kindergarten yard at a kibbutz near the Gaza border, and at least one other damaged a house. Thankfully, there were no casualties or serious injuries. In response to the attacks and mortars, the Israeli Air Force carried out strikes on 65 Hamas and Islamic Jihad targets in Gaza and destroyed a two-kilometre tunnel near the Kerem Shalom crossing. No casualties or serious injuries were reported in Gaza as a result of the strikes.

On 29 May, the Hamas Al-Qassam Brigades and the Islamic Jihad's Sarai Al-Quds claimed joint responsibility for the rockets and mortars fired at Israel. Their joint statement blamed Israel for targeting their fighters and military positions during the preceding 48 hours, cautioned against attempts to dictate new equations on the status quo and warned that they would reciprocate "shelling with shelling and blood with blood". In the meanwhile, Prime Minister Netanyahu vowed that Israel would respond with great force to the rocket attacks, as for more than 24 hours Israeli communities around Gaza lived with the fear of having mere seconds to seek shelter from incoming rockets.

Such attacks are completely unacceptable. The firing of rockets and mortars against civilians cannot be justified under any circumstances. I take this opportunity to call on the international community to join me in unequivocally condemning the indiscriminate targeting of civilians and the dangerous escalation in Gaza. This dangerous escalation comes after a series of warnings by the United Nations and in the context of recent developments on the ground. It cannot be divorced from the context of the two months of protests at the Gaza fence, in which approximately 110 Palestinians were killed and a large number were injured. Throughout this period, militants have also placed improvised explosive devices (IEDs) at the perimeter fence and attempted, sometimes successfully, to breach it, with the intention of damaging military infrastructure and perpetuating attacks against Israelis.

Particularly in the days following 14 May, several such incidents were filmed and posted on social media, prompting a response by Israel on targets inside Gaza. On 27 May, in response to an IED found by the IDF adjacent to the fence, the IDF targeted a Palestinian Islamic Jihad observation post and killed three members of the group. Islamic Jihad issued a statement vowing to retaliate for what it described as a dangerous escalation. Subsequently, on 28 May, the IDF announced it had fired a tank shell at another observation post, killing a member of the military wing of Hamas. The shelling took place after Israeli troops came under fire, reportedly by Hamas militants, while arresting two Palestinians who had crossed the perimeter fence into Israel. During the night of 28 May, machine-gun fire from Gaza also hit the Israeli city of Sderot, causing

damage to several buildings and a vehicle. The next day, the situation escalated.

Since the early hours of this morning, the situation has quietened down and, since 5 a.m. there have been no projectiles launched from Gaza or any IDF strikes on locations inside the Gaza Strip. In that respect, I welcome the efforts of Egypt aimed at ensuring that calm prevails, and I reiterate my call on all sides to uphold all understandings and prevent the recurrence of any incident that jeopardizes the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike.

It is imperative that this period of calm be preserved at all costs. No one in Gaza can afford another war. No one has the right to play with the lives of 2 million people who have lived through hell in the past decade. No one should live in fear of an indiscriminate rocket attack. All parties have a responsibility to do their part to de-escalate and to step back from the brink, in the interests of their own people and the future of their own children. As demonstrations and protests in Gaza continue into the month of June, I am concerned that we may experience further violence and additional risks of escalation.

Despite the dangerous escalation, Gaza's civilian infrastructure did not sustain any significant damage as a result of Israeli retaliatory fire yesterday. Moreover, the crossing points for people and goods remained open and functioned normally. The Rafah crossing into Egypt continued operations for the nineteenth consecutive day, and both the Kerem Shalom and the Erez crossings into Israel functioned with only minor delays. Nevertheless, fire from Gaza has caused damage to electricity installations on the Israeli side, resulting in a reduction of more than 30 per cent of the only electricity supply there is to Gaza, and it will take a few days at least to repair that.

As I recently briefed the Council, Gaza's electricity, water and health systems continue to experience unprecedented strain (see S/PV.8265). Egyptian electricity lines have been effectively down since February, and the Gaza power plant has not functioned since April. Today the total supply for Gaza is barely enough to provide three hours of sustained electricity.

Finally, during my briefing to the Council last week, I was greatly encouraged by the willingness of Council members to consider ideas to change the reality in Gaza. Under the current circumstances, failure to act immediately with a set of relatively modest, achievable interventions will only amplify the humanitarian crisis and drastically increase the risk of confrontation. The goals that I outlined last week remain as valid as ever: to prevent a war with potential regional implications, address the urgent humanitarian needs of the population and support Egyptian reconciliation efforts. That means that we need to urgently implement already approved projects, revive efforts to empower the Government to take up its responsibilities and, very important, sustain the 2014 ceasefire understandings on the ground and halt the militant build-up.

The United Nations will move forward on immediately enhancing our capacity and presence to facilitate project implementation in Gaza and improve coordination with Israel, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority in order to overcome political, administrative and logistical blockages. It is important that all sides agree to improve movement and access restrictions and ensure uninterrupted and upgraded water and electricity supply to the population.

This plan is the only sustainable way to ensure that we do not again slide into another devastating conflict, that we do not allow Gaza to become a pawn in somebody else's plans, another tragedy on the already crowded map of regional Middle East conflicts. But I would also like to use this opportunity to send a very clear message to Palestinians in Gaza. We hear their plight, we see their suffering and we will do all that we can to ensure that they have a future beyond mere survival, a future of freedom and development, a future focused on peace and prosperity, where they are the masters of their own fate, a future for all Palestinians, under a single democratic Government, living in a State of Palestine, side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel.

That is why we need to make sure that calm continues, that the militant build-up ends and that we deny those who want to disrupt peace any opportunity to do so. Without those conditions in place, it will be impossible to move forward on achieving our long-term political and developmental goals. It is high time that we intensify our calls on Israelis and Palestinians to undertake concrete steps that will advance the goal of a just and sustainable peace. Such actions must encompass the overarching political objectives, the unification of Gaza and the West Bank under a single democratic and legitimate Palestinian Authority, an end to the occupation and a resolution to the wider Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the two-State

solution and in line with previous agreements and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

This latest round of attacks is a warning. It is a warning to all of us how close to the brink of war we are every single day.

The President: I thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his briefing.

The United States called this meeting today to talk about the dangerous and destructive activities of the Hamas terrorist organization in the Gaza Strip. One might think that the rest of the Security Council would join us in condemning a terrorist organization like Hamas. There should not be any debate about this. But of course, because this attack involves Israel the standard is different.

The United States drafted a Security Council statement that would have condemned Hamas for launching rockets and endangering civilians. This should have been a no-brainer. One would think no one would want to side with Hamas when it comes to condemning rocket launches, but the statement was blocked. We called for this meeting under the agenda item "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts", but we were blocked again. Apparently, some Council members did not think that Hamas launching rockets qualified as terrorism. The United States begs to differ. We all know that certain actions in and around Gaza receive an enormous amount of attention, both here in the Security Council and throughout the international media. Strangely, other actions do not receive nearly the attention that they deserve.

What happened yesterday is one such action that calls out for attention and condemnation. The facts are clear. On 29 May, Hamas and an allied militant group fired at least 70 rockets and mortars from Gaza into Israel. That rocket attack was indiscriminate, aiming to cause as much civilian death and destruction as possible. There were several injuries but, thank goodness, there were no deaths. But the mere fact that one of the rockets landed on a kindergarten playground is all the proof we need of the intentions of the terrorists. The horrifying damage that could have been done is unthinkable.

Unlike some situations we deal with here in the Security Council, where guilty parties claim mistaken identity or lack of evidence of responsibility, this is clearly not the case. Hamas openly claims responsibility for that attack. They do so proudly. Their only regret is that the attack did not kill anyone. The Security Council has always been quick to pounce on Israel, regardless of the facts or the circumstances. I am very interested in how my colleagues respond when the attacks are directly against Israel. These attacks are a clear escalation of violence and take no steps whatsoever to protect against civilian casualties. In fact, the entire desired outcome of the attacks is to maximize civilian casualties. There are a couple of major conclusions to be drawn from that disconnect.

First, this outrageous terrorist attack proves what we have consistently maintained, namely, that the stated purpose of Hamas is the destruction of Israel. That is its purpose when it fires rockets into Israel. That is its purpose when it builds terror tunnels underneath Israeli territory. And that is its purpose when it orchestrates violent protests and riots at the boundary fence, calling for a march for return. All of those acts are indivisible parts of a single strategy. That strategy is to do as much damage as possible to Israel and to provoke a response in self-defence that will create international condemnation of Israeli actions.

Secondly, the actions of Hamas prove the falsehood of the idea that the people of Gaza require international protection. The people of Gaza do not need protection from an external source. The people of Gaza need protection from Hamas. It is the actions of Hamas that are putting Gazans in grave danger. The indiscriminate attacks by Hamas against Israel inevitably bring about a response. As I have asked my colleagues before, I will ask them again today: Who among us would accept 70 rockets launched into their country? We all know the answer to that question: no one would.

The Palestinian people of Gaza are facing desperate humanitarian hardships. We want to help address their needs. We support Special Coordinator Mladenov's engagement to restart initiatives that could improve conditions in Gaza. But here again, we must look at the destructive actions of Hamas. In recent weeks, Hamas militants have repeatedly assaulted the Kerem Shalom border crossing — the biggest lifeline for basic humanitarian goods into Gaza. In its attacks yesterday, Hamas rockets damaged three power lines, knocking out electric power to tens of thousands of Palestinians.

Those monstrous actions demonstrate complete disregard for the people of Gaza. Apparently, it is not enough for Hamas to incite military responses to its acts of terrorism. Hamas also feels compelled to increase the suffering of the people in Gaza. We note reports today that Hamas has unilaterally declared a ceasefire. We hope that the ceasefire holds and that there are no more rocket attacks. But the fact that Hamas can even declare a ceasefire is further confirmation of its responsibility for those attacks in the first place.

When we consider the situation in Gaza, this is what the Security Council should address. It is outrageous for the Security Council to fail to condemn Hamas rocket attacks against Israeli civilians while the Human Rights Council approves sending a team to investigate Israeli actions taken in self-defence. I urge the members of the Security Council to exercise at least as much scrutiny when it comes to the actions of the Hamas terrorist group as it does to Israel's legitimate right of self-defence. To allow Hamas to continue to get away with its terrorist acts and to somehow expect Israel to sit on its hands when it is attacked is the height of hypocrisy. To continue to condemn Israel without even acknowledging what is actually coming from the leaders of Gaza makes me question who actually cares about the welfare of the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian people deserve a better life. That can happen only if we acknowledge and reject the terrorist actions of Hamas and if we encourage more responsible Palestinian leadership. All responsible parties should be encouraging both sides to come to the negotiating table for the well-being of the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank the Special Coordinator for his very sobering briefing.

Echoing Ambassador Haley's concern, I condemn — without qualification and in the strongest terms — yesterday's mortar and rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians are unacceptable and they are unjustifiable. Those who risk killing or injuring children are heinous. The attacks cannot be ignored by the Security Council. The United Kingdom fully supports Israel's right to self-defence and the right to defend its citizens from such acts of terror.

The recent spike in rocket attacks from Gaza is a stark reminder that the risk of a renewed conflict is very much present, and I think the Special Coordinator brought that out very clearly in his briefing today. The latest attacks follow the deaths of more than 100 Palestinian in recent weeks of protests, and the Council has addressed that previously. Civilians live in fear and in despair. Further escalation of violence risks a devastating effect on efforts to restore the peace process and can bring about only renewed suffering to the region. As Council members, we should act to ensure that does not come to fruition.

The situation in Gaza in undeniably dangerous. It is sad and it is complex. The perpetual cycle of violence needs to end and serves no one's interests. The actions of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad represent a real and concerning threat to Israeli security. Ultimately, the ongoing decisions of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad to embrace violence and reject the Quartet principles lie at the heart of the Gaza situation.

We should use this Council meeting today to demand that Hamas and other terrorist groups cease all violent and provocative actions, and cease any and all actions that put civilian lives at risk. At the same time, we do not ignore the significant contribution that restrictions on movement and access imposed on Gaza have on the dire humanitarian situation that we witness.

The United Kingdom continues its support for the full return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza, and we encourage further progress on reconciliation. An end to this violence requires a tangible path for changing Gaza, and what the Special Coordinator had to say about the plan was very interesting. We believe that it is the responsibility of the international community to work together to find a way to alleviate the humanitarian suffering in Gaza. We welcome the proposals that Mr. Mladenov made, which include commitments to advance urgent infrastructure and economic development projects, improve access and movement and support the Egyptian-led reconciliation process.

We stand ready as the United Kingdom to do everything that we can to support those efforts. The people of Gaza are in urgent and desperate need. Yesterday, my Government committed to providing a new package of over $2 million of life-saving support. The funding will support work by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Society in keeping hospitals open and functioning at a time when the health-care system in Gaza is under huge strain.

Ultimately, peace will come only through fresh negotiations between the parties, supported by the international community. Every day makes it more critical that both Israelis and Palestinians return to direct negotiations and urgently prioritize steps to resolve the situation in Gaza. That is the only way that we will be able to achieve the two-State solution and a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian State. Those who seek to undermine that, including through unjustified acts of violence, deserve the rightful condemnation of the Council, as well as of the whole world.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Nickolay Mladenov for his precise briefing and commitment, which is more necessary than ever. I will be brief. We have had an opportunity to speak several times on the situation in Gaza and the Israeli-Palestinian question over the past few weeks. I will keep to three points, namely, the escalation of the situation over the past few days in Gaza, the ongoing protests in the Gaza Strip during recent weeks, which are part of a structural crisis, and the responsibility of the Security Council in the face of that situation.

First, for several weeks now, we have alerted the Council to the risk of an escalation in the situation in the Gaza Strip, which is not tenable in the long-term. As yesterday showed once again, there is a real risk of a cycle of violence, of which the players in question could quickly lose control. After three conflicts in the past decade, the situation is sadly predictable, and the same causes are still producing the same tragic effects in the Gaza Strip. On 29 May alone, almost 30 rockets were fired into Israeli territory from the Gaza Strip — an unprecedented number since the conflict of 2014. Those rocket launches deliberately targeted civilians. They are unacceptable. Regardless of the perpetrators, France condemns them without any ambiguity whatsoever. I would like to recall France's tireless commitment to Israel's security. Beyond that, the context is very tense, and we therefore call for restraint. The issue here is to try to avoid a new fatal conflict in Gaza, where once again it would be the civilians paying the price.

Secondly, I would like to underline that the armed escalation comes at the end of two months of violence and repression carried out by the Israeli armed forces against Palestinian protesters in Gaza, and 14 May marked its highpoint. With more than 116 dead thus far, 60 on that day alone, and more than 12,000 people injured, including 4,000 by live ammunition, the figures of the past few weeks are all the more tragic because they could have largely been avoided.

We have said it before, that result is directly linked to an indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force by the Israeli army, facilitated by extremely permissive rules of engagement, which we have condemned. Israel is a democracy and should respect the right to peaceably protest. As an occupying Power, it should furthermore respect the obligations for protection that are incumbent upon it. Similarly, we have called for those protests to remain peaceful, and we have warned those, first and foremost Hamas, who have tried to instrumentalize those protests for political or military ends.

An acute crisis exists in Gaza, which we can all see and which serves to highlight the vulnerability of the civilian population against the backdrop of a structural humanitarian and political crisis, anchored in a decade of the Israeli blockade and exacerbated by the impasse in the reconciliation process. The protests over recent weeks cannot be dissociated from the despair of the inhabitants of Gaza. We will not be able to address that crisis without restoring the dignity and renewing a sense of hope for the future of that population, of which more than half is under 18-years-old.

In that regard, we commend the essential work done by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the Gaza Strip. The Agency is one of the last safety nets to avert the collapse of Gaza's, two thirds of which is made up of Palestinian refugees. UNRWA requires increased financial support from the international community, given the frozen American contribution. With iin mind, the donor conference to be held on 25 June will be crucial. Any good will that is expressed will be important and appreciated. We once again call on our American friends to not turn their backs on their historic role of supporting UNRWA, which is more than ever key to regional stability.

Finally, beyond the immediate de-escalation that is required and the urgent humanitarian response, we need a long-term response to the issues in Gaza. Such response is essential for the population of Gaza and for regional stability, both of which are being addressed by the plan undertaken by Nickolay Mladenov. The Special Coordinator has all of our support in defining priority projects, in particular for infrastructure. Furthermore, we support his proposals to strengthen

project management within the United Nations in Gaza and dialogue with Israel, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority. As we have said, those proposals should include immediate measures to ease restrictions on the movement of goods and persons. Ultimately, our objective should be to lift the blockade, while respecting Israel's security concerns. Furthermore, Mr. Mladenov's proposals should be supported by specific approaches to resuming the reconciliation process. In political terms, our horizon should be the re-establishment of all of the prerogatives of the Palestinian Authority in Gaza.

Thirdly, I will conclude by underlining once again the responsibility that is incumbent upon the Council — it bears the principal role of upholding peace and security, which is set forth by the Charter of the United Nations, but it also has a particular role to play in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, of which it has defined the main parameters over several decades to resolve the conflict, although unilateral action has recently rendered them fragile.

Gaza has been approaching collapse in the past few months, while it has been in the grip of violence for several weeks. It is on the verge of a new conflict, and yet the Council remains silent. With gravity, I say to those present that such silence weighs more and more heavily, it is increasingly deafening and it is not acceptable. It is unacceptable for the populations of both Palestine and Israel, who were the first ones affected by the conflict. It is unacceptable for the world, which is watching us and sees in that silence not only a sign of impotence but, worse, also a reason for mistrust. That is unacceptable for the credibility of the Council and for our collective action, which is at stake.

The Security Council cannot abdicate its responsibilities on this matter. France has been ready to engage in a constructive discussion on all draft texts that have been presented to Council members over the past few months and up to today, without exception. We have been given a new opportunity to overcome our silence by engaging in an open, but demanding, way in the discussion on the draft resolution submitted by Kuwait. The text has already been extensively improved. A number of aspects still require clarification and nuance, and we intend to continue to play our part in arriving at a text that is capable of garnering broad support within the Council. I invite everyone to commit to the same approach. Once again, it is a question of our collective responsibility.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his valuable briefing on the recent developments in the Gaza Strip and the most recent developments in the occupied territories. We commend his endeavours and underscore our full support for his efforts. We also thank the delegation of the United States for calling this meeting to discuss the situation in the occupied territories — a situation that continues to deteriorate in the light of the ongoing oppressive practices of the Israeli occupying power. We reiterate our firm and principled position related to the condemnation of targeting civilians by any party anywhere and at any time.

The Israeli occupying power bears full responsibility for the most recent escalation in the occupied territories. For as long that occupation continues, the Palestinian people have the legitimate right to fight it and defend their aspirations and dreams of independence and a life of freedom and dignity. We support their fight and commend their steadfastness in the face of the destructive Israeli machine.

The Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories cannot be justified. The occupation in itself is a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. It must end, as it is the root cause of the problem and the conflict in the region. It is unacceptable that the international community remains silent and inactive in the face of recurrent Israeli violations in the occupied territories, contrary to international humanitarian law, international human rights law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

The occupation continues, even though the international community has condemned it and the Security Council called for it to cease in resolution 2334 (2016). Arrests continue to be carried out, along with the seizure of land and the destruction of houses. The occupation proceeds systematically, even though it has been condemned by the world as inhumane.

Moreover, illegal unilateral measures that seek the Judaization of Jerusalem and changing its demographic composition, character and religious sanctity continue. Recurrent incursions by settlers and occupying forces into Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem every now and then continue to provoke Muslims. The blockade on Gaza has gone on for over 10 years. It is a repressive blockade

of nearly 2 million people. The occupying power did not respect its obligations in accordance with international law and did not heed the call to lift restrictions on the freedom of movement of people and goods and to open border crossings in Gaza amid deterioration in the economic and living conditions. That has led to more suffering for the Palestinian people, which has generated widespread despair.

In the past few weeks, Israel, the occupying power, has used live ammunition and shot at civilian protesters who came out to peacefully revive the Great March of Return. As a result of that, more than 120 martyrs fell, including some children. Thousands were wounded and some were permanently disabled. We have submittted three draft statements to the press expressing our concern, given the death of those victims, and affirming their right to protest peacefully. We also called for a transparent and independent investigation into that massacre. However, all those press statements were rejected.

Therefore, the State of Kuwait has submitted a draft resolution to provide international protection to the Palestinian people, because they are the ones who deserve protection and not the occupying Power, which claims that it is defending itself while it possesses a huge and sophisticated arsenal that it uses excessively against defenceless people under occupation. The State of Kuwait has ensured transparency and inclusiveness in the negotiations on the draft resolution and has taken into account many of the proposed amendments. We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by the Security Council so that a message can be sent to the Palestinian people that the international community, represented by the Security Council, will do them justice and stand by their side in their plight, and that it will do its utmost and shoulder its responsibility to help them recover their legitimate rights, and that long-awaited justice will finally be served.

In that regard, we welcome the resolution of the Human Rights Council adopted on 18 May in relation to urgently deploying an investigative team to the occupied Palestinian territories, especially Gaza, to investigate all Israeli violations.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait supports the choice of peace because it is the strategic option, as underscored in resolutions of the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and many conferences. Our objective is to establish comprehensive, just and sustainable peace, based on internationally legitimate resolutions and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), as well as the principle of land for peace, the Quarted road map and the Arab Peace Initiative. That objective should lead to Israel's withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 4 June 1967, so as to ensure that the Palestinian people achieve all their legitimate political rights, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State on their territory with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov for his briefing.

We note with regret that in addition to the tragic events of recent days in the occupied Palestinian territories, on 29 May there was once again a sharp escalation in armed activity on the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip. Fighters fired on settlements in Israeli territory. The Israeli air force retaliated with missile strikes. It is worrisome that the parties are increasingly resorting to violence, constantly deepening their distrust and making the possibility of relaunching the peace process an ever more distant prospect. The civilians of Israel and Palestine are becoming hostages to this developing situation.

We believe that relying on force and rejecting direct dialogue represent a road to nowhere. That relates not only to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but to any other crisis situation. We call on all parties to exercise restraint. We have repeatedly said that the trend to increasing destabilization in the occupied Palestinian territories is directly connected to the impasse in the political process. The Middle East settlement, unresolved for so long, is in a stalemate, and instead of tackling its fundamental issues, the Security Council has been compelled to address the undesirable consequences of the impasse. That approach is not productive, to put it mildly, and will not enable us to overcome the massive deterioration in the situation, which is certainly in nobody's interest. Nor will it help us to address the chronic problems of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, such as provocative rhetoric, unilateral actions, outbreaks of violence and settlement activities.

It will be crucial to mobilize efforts to resume the political process between Palestinians and Israelis on the basis of the well-known international law on the subject, including the decisions of the Security Council and the principles of the Arab Peace Initiative, the outcome of which should be the implementation of a two-State solution and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem.

Our position on the demonstrations in Gaza remains unchanged. We affirm the right to peaceful protest action and firmly condemn the indiscriminate use of force against civilians and the firing of rockets into Israeli territory. We call on the parties to refrain from steps that could lead to further deterioration of the situation. It will be important to continue intensive efforts to ease the difficult humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. The continuing hopelessness of the situation plays into the hands of forces with an interest in further radicalizing the situation. Widespread despair is a fertile breeding ground for extremism. In that connection, we note the important work being done by the United Nations and particularly by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in the occupied Palestinian territories. We welcome and support the involvement of regional actors in the Middle East peace process. We commend Egypt and Jordan for the role they have been playing in Palestinian affairs.

In conclusion, we would like to underscore that the direction of the developments in the situation on the occupied Palestinian territories once again confirms that the international community does not have the right to ignore Palestine while addressing other problems in the Middle East. We must act. In our view, the Middle East Quartet is the appropriate and necessary forum, as endorsed by Security Council resolutions, for ending the impasse in the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his briefing.

China closely follows the current tensions in Palestine and is particularly concerned about the risk of a potential escalation of conflict in Gaza. We hope that the relevant actors, Israel and Palestine, will remain calm, exercise restraint, work towards the same goals, cease military action and take concrete measures in order to achieve progress in de-escalation. China has continued to call for the settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute through peaceful negotiations. China opposes all violence, which leads to a deterioration of the situation and targets civilians.

The Security Council and the relevant parties should aim to achieve peace and tranquillity and strive to create the necessary conditions for stabilizing the situation and resuming dialogue. China's Special Envoy on the Middle East issue paid a recent visit to Palestine and Israel and met with Special Coordinator Mladenov. The two sides held an in-depth exchange of views on the Palestinian question, in particular the current situation in Gaza, and conveyed the importance of ongoing progress in the Middle East peace process.

The Palestinian question is at the core of the situation in the Middle East. It is an underlying issue for the attainment of peace in the region. Under the current circumstances, the long-delayed resumption of peace talks between Palestine and Israel is highly urgent and necessary. The international community should do its utmost to promote the resumption of talks and reach a comprehensive, just and lasting solution as soon as possible. That is the only way to achieve peace between Palestine and Israel and to guarantee stability and security in Gaza. The international community should continue to uphold the two-State solution, work in accordance with the existing international consensus, including relevant United Nations resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative and play a constructive role in the political settlement of the Palestinian question.

I would like to reiterate the fact that China has always been committed to promoting the Middle East peace process and supporting the just cause of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate national rights. China supports the establishment of a fully sovereign, independent State of Palestine on the basis of pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. China will continue to follow President Xi Jinping's four-point proposal for the promotion of a political settlement of the Palestinian question, work together with all the parties concerned in the international community and play a positive and constructive role in the achievement of peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his pertinent briefing. We very much welcome his commitment to addressing the volatile situation and contributing to a de-escalation of violence.

I would like to begin by expressing deep regret about the violence and about the large number of people who have been killed and injured over the past few weeks. Sweden condemns yesterday's indiscriminate firing of rockets by Palestinian militants from Gaza towards Israel. Such attacks are unacceptable and must stop immediately. We note that at least one of the rockets fell in the vicinity of a kindergarten. As we have clearly stated in the Chamber, children must never be the target of violence, be put at risk or encouraged to participate in violence.

Yesterday's attack did not take place in a vacuum. Since 30 March the Council has been seized repeatedly of the violence in and around Gaza. As we all know, Gaza is on the verge of social and economic collapse. We must urgently address the humanitarian crisis and alleviate the suffering of its people. Just last week, we welcomed proposals to that end. We encourage efforts to take such measures forward with renewed urgency and determination.

It is important to prioritize initiatives that have immediate positive effects on the daily lives of Palestinians in Gaza and the wider region. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) plays a critical role in providing fundamental services, such as health and education, thereby contributing to stability in the egion. It must receive needed urgent political and financial support from us all. In words and deeds, Sweden has repeatedly encouraged and called for a remedy to UNRWA's financial crisis, .

We also underline the importance of unimpeded access to Gaza for all humanitarian actors. It is crucial that our humanitarian support contribute to increased intra-Palestinian unity. It is therefore high time to end the policy of closure in Gaza. While fully understanding the legitimate security concerns of Israel, Palestine and Egypt, we repeat our call for the lifting of restrictions and full and sustained access and movement. We welcome Egypt's opening of the Rafah crossing point during the holy month of Ramadan, as well as Egypt's efforts towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation.

Yesterday's developments occurred at a sensitive time. Once again we urge all parties to act with the utmost restraint to prevent loss of life and protect civilians, in particular children, ensure that all measures taken are proportionate and take immediate steps to de-escalate the situation and break the cycle of violence. We welcome the fact that the attacks and retaliation appear to have ended, at least for now.

The Council has the responsibility to contribute to de-escalation in Gaza. As many others around the table have said today, we regret that the Council has not been able to agree on public statements relating to the situation. The Council must come together to address the crisis and more broadely engage in efforts to advance the peace process and the two-State solution. We thank the Kuwaiti delegation for the draft resolution, which includes a call for measures for improving the situation for civilians in Palestine, including the establishment of a mechanism for that purpose. We hope for constructive engagement by everyone on the draft resolution.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I would like to thank Mr. Nikolay Mladenov for his briefing.

We have been following reports of escalating violence in the occupied Palestinian territory and of events taking place in Gaza, about which we are very concerned. It has been just two weeks since the emergency Security Council meeting (see S/PV.8256) following the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory, which left many Palestinians dead and injured in the Gaza protest. At that meeting we expressed our seeped sorrow and sympathy on the loss of life. While we called on Israel to show maximum restraint, we also stated that Hamas and the leaders of the demonstrations had a responsibility to prevent all violent actions and provocations. I would like to echo what the Special Coordinator said yesterday, to the effect that he was deeply concerned by the indiscriminate firing of rockets by Palestinian militants from Gaza towards southern Israel. He also said that such attacks were unacceptable and undermined the serious efforts made by the international community to improve the situation in Gaza. His statement, which we feel is most valid, highlights how dangerous the rocket attacks from Gaza are and the hindrance they cause to making progress in the peace process. This must stop, for they are in the interest of no one, least of all the Palestinians.

Under these circumstances, it is impossible to deny Israel the right to self-defence, a right that goes along with a responsibility to ensure proportionality. We in the Council have repeatedly said that any negative action that runs counter to a peaceful settlement of the conflict will only prolong the process of resolving the problem. It is therefore self-evident that unless the peace process is advanced and the underlying

problems solved peacefully, the tragedy at hand will only happen again and again, eventually reaching the point of no return. That is where we seem to be headed. The situation is that grave, and much worse violence is becoming imminent, despite the current calm situation. This is part and parcel of the very logic of the situation, and that is why preserving the possibility of finding a solution through a two-State formula is critical. That is also why a de-escalation of this dangerous situation remains critical, so as to protect civilians, break the cycle of violence and resume the much-needed political process.

We appreciate the role played by Egypt in trying to de-escalate the situation, and we note that today the ceasefire appears to be holding. This could calm the situation for a while, but to resume the political process, the parties, as well as the international community, have their own, respective responsibilities. While the parties should show the flexibility to engage in direct and meaningful negotiations so as to reach a final settlement on all issues, the international community, in particular the Council, should discharge its responsibilities in helping and encouraging the two parties to do so.

In conclusion, let me say that it is very important to get the narrative right. It would not be right to lose sight of the root causes of this tragic and potentially extremely dangerous situation. The possibility of a two-State solution is shrinking by the day, to the frustration of the Palestinians, whose living conditions, particularly in Gaza, are deeply worrying indeed. As Mr. Mladenov said recently, at one point weeks ago Gaza was on the verge of total collapse, with all the attendant consequences. He reiterated that view today. That situation is conducive to the creation of groups of all stripes that would pose a threat not only to the peoples of Palestine and Israel but also to the region as the whole. That is why the resumption of the peace process is so critical and why there is no other option for saving the possibility of the two-State solution.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Madam President, for having convened this emergency meeting. Our thanks go also to Mr. Mladenov for his in-depth briefing.

Peru notes with deep alarm and deplores the recent launching of rockets and mortar shells against Israeli urban centres by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, one of which struck the yard of a kindergarten. We condemn any attack against civilians while also recognizing Israel's right to guarantee its own security and to deploy legitimate defence measures, in line with the principles of proportionality, precaution and legality.

We are alarmed also by the bleak outlook for the situation in the short and medium term and the exacerbation of inflammatory rhetoric in the wake of the acts of violence and terror over the past few days and the deaths of Palestinians that occurred in Gaza over the past few weeks. In that context, we would like to commend the Egyptian efforts to bring about a de-escalation and a ceasefire. We believe that it is necessary that all parties act cautiously and with restraint, and adhere strictly to international humanitarian and human rights law. The Council, which is responsible for maintaining international peace and security, must ensure the proper levels of accountability for the violations that have occurred.

We deem it regrettable that, faced with the undeniable deterioration of the situation, the Council has not thus far been able to achieve the minimum consensus needed for this body to speak out and to define the actions that need to be taken, including the need to address the root causes of the conflict and the urgent need to alleviate the tragic humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Peru will continue to work constructively to protect civilians on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to promote the resumption of a political dialogue that will allow us to put an end to this spiral of violence and to rekindle the negotiations required in order to achieve a two-State solution with secure and internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his update on the latest developments and would like to make the following observations.

Kazakhstan condemns the rocket firings from Gaza towards Israel on 29 May, which further erode prospects for peace. We have followed with the utmost concern reports of the overnight missile launches from Gaza targeting Israeli positions, including the site where a mortar shell from Gaza hit a kindergarten in southern Israel, near the border with the Strip.

We want to make it clear that such attacks can cause lasting damage to the peace process in several different ways. We agree that the uncertainty and volatility of the current environment are hardening diverse positions

and sharpening the rhetoric on all sides, which may well play into the hands of extremists. Astana urges an immediate halt to all hostile acts and provocative actions in order to avert a fresh conflagration in the region, which is already embroiled in brutal conflicts, resulting in the immense suffering of civilians. We must prevent incidents that jeopardize the lives of Israelis and Palestinians and urge both sides to exercise maximum restraint and abide by their obligations under the relevant United Nations and international conventions and resolutions on the protection of civilians.

Both sides and the international community must consolidate our collective efforts for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. We should ensure that words are translated into concrete action. My country also underscores the importance of intra-Palestinian unity, so as to bring all factions together and unite them under a legitimate and democratic Palestinian Authority.

My delegation also appreciates the efforts of the Russian Federation and Egypt to ensure intra-Palestinian consolidation and urge all Palestinian political parties and movements to integrate into one national political structure. It is critical that the Palestine Liberation Organization take control of the Gaza Strip.

Kazakhstan calls upon the Middle East Quartet — the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations — to intensify its efforts to resume negotiations, with a view to defining mutual borders and the principle of the peaceful coexistence of two States on the basis of international law and Security Council resolutions.

We note that the difficult humanitarian situation in Gaza, which further contributes to instability and frustration, could lead to a resumption of conflict and an increase in terrorist activities. We therefore urge the official authorities of Israel and Palestine to help resolve the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. At present, the nearly 2 million Palestinian residents of Gaza, more than half of whom are children, live in dire conditions that are deteriorating daily. The future of the sector's young people is being shaped today, and we are afraid that it is not the future that Palestinians or Israelis or anyone of us in the international community would want to see. It is clear that we need confidence-building measures in the economic area, with the support of the international community, for durable peace and stability to take hold.

Finally, Kazakhstan supports the proposals of Nickolay Mladenov and, as always, stands for the early resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiation process, especially in a bilateral format, of a two-State solution. The immediate start of the deliberations and, as a result, the speedy implementation of agreements will allow us to solve the problem of confidence deficits. It will also enable us to move to a more open dialogue between the two sides upon mutually identified issues. Only steps such as these can bring us closer to the goals we have set for ourselves.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his insightful briefing.

After the tragic events linked to the March of Return, the Gaza Strip is once again the scene of violent clashes, following a series of Israeli strikes carried out in reprisal for dozens of mortars and rockets fired at Israel from the Palestinian enclave. My delegation remains deeply concerned about this new cycle of violence, which threatens to plunge the entire region into chaos. We unreservedly condemn these acts of violence and call on the various parties to agree to an immediate and lasting ceasefire. My country also urges the parties to the conflict to engage in a constructive dialogue to find a political solution to a crisis that has shaken the region for decades.

Côte d'Ivoire cannot say it enough: there is no alternative to peace, any more than there can be a military solution to the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its principled position that only credible dialogue and political negotiations between the parties will lead to a viable solution for the two States living side by side in peace and security, based on the mutual recognition of the legitimate rights of both parties. My delegation therefore urges the international community to continue, without respite, its mediation efforts in the context of the resumption of the political process between the two parties, with a view to making the two-State solution a tangible reality, in the best interests of the Israeli and Palestinian populations.

My delegation deplores the lack of political prospects in the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We are particularly concerned about the outbreak of violence that we are unfortunately witnessing in the Gaza Strip, which is largely sustained by a difficult economic and humanitarian situation, heavily affected

by the blockade in force, youth unemployment and various shortages of water, electricity and medicines. It is therefore important that the international community intensify its efforts to implement projects and concrete measures to improve the humanitarian situation, but also the economic development of the Gaza Strip. Moreover, this situation also highlights the need to continue the inter-Palestinian dialogue for the implementation of the reconciliation agreement signed in Cairo on 12 October 2017 between Hamas and Fatah. That will allow the effective return of the Palestinian Authority to, and its full control of, the Gaza Strip to better address the humanitarian and security needs of the people.

In conclusion, my delegation fully supports the objective of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East and reiterates its readiness to work with all Council members towards a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We reiterate our call to the parties to refrain from any act of violence that would have the effect of removing any hope of a peaceful resolution of a conflict that has lasted too long.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Bolivia wishes to thank Mr. Mladenov not only for his briefing but also for his active work in such a difficult and complex situation. In addition, we thank the delegation of the United States for having called for today's meeting. We believe that the situation in Palestine is a priority issue — and it should be one — for the Security Council, and I believe that we have not had enough meetings, and certainly not enough results, on it.

Consistent with its pacifist policy, Bolivia categorically condemns attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure in all their forms and manifestations as unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed. Bolivia also welcomes the efforts made by Egypt to seek a ceasefire in Gaza. We call on the Government of Israel to act accordingly and desist from its decision to continue the bombing and air raids.

As several members of the Council already stated, this situation does not exist in a vacuum. The latest escalation of violence that we are witnessing only contributes to an intensification of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. More than 2 million Palestinians continue to live without access to basic services, with power cuts lasting more than 22 hours, overcrowded hospitals and congestion in the delivery of health care, lack of medicines and a shortage of water for human consumption, inter alia, as a result of 11 years of a systematic blockade by sea, 11 years of a systematic siege by land and 11 years of being prevented from returning to their homes.

As the occupying Power, Israel has an obligation to comply fully and scrupulously with its legal obligations under international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and the Fourth Geneva Convention, to resume without further delay the opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons. In that regard, we demand that the parties comply with and respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including on the protection of civilians. We therefore call on the membership of the Security Council to support the draft resolution proposed by the Kuwaiti delegation, which aims to adopt appropriate measures to guarantee the security, well-being and protection of civilians.

We note with great concern that the atmosphere of violence in the region has so alarmingly deteriorated in recent weeks. Mr. Mladenov has constantly and repeatedly warned the Security Council that we are on the verge of a clash with unpredictable consequences. This is of course aggravated by the unilateral decision of the Government of the United States of America to move its Embassy to Jerusalem in violation of various rules of international law. For those who have forgotten, the last flare-up in Gaza, in 2014, resulted in the deaths of 1,462 Palestinian civilians, of whom 551 were children, and 11,200 Palestinians injured, of whom 3,400 were children. That is to say that if we do not remember what happened, we are doomed to repeat its bitter reality.

We reiterate once again our rejection of Israeli settlement plans and their expansionist policies as being in open violation of resolution 2334 (2016), on the illegality of Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories. Accordingly, we wish to state once again that the root cause of the situation in the occupied territories in Palestine, which of course is worth repeating, is the illegal Israeli occupation of the territories. We reaffirm our conviction that the only long-term solution is the two-State solution, in which a free, sovereign and independent Palestinian State is finally built, within the pre-1967 international borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital in accordance with the resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): I join others in thanking Mr. Mladenov for his accurate briefing and dedicated work in very challenging circumstances.

As Mr. Mladenov said, yesterday's events once again show the great the risk of escalation in the absence of progress in the political, economic, humanitarian dimensions. The current situation is simply not sustainable. In that context, I will focus on three issues — first, yesterday's escalation; secondly, the crisis in Gaza; and, thirdly, developments in the West Bank.

On my first point, the escalation we witnessed yesterday, in the early hours of 29 May, Palestinian terrorist groups fired rockets and mortars towards Israel. Those rockets and mortars landed in civilian areas, one of them in the playground of a kindergarten, as others have already indicated. Luckily, no one got hurt. The Kingdom of the Netherlands condemns these indiscriminate attacks from Gaza into Israel. As our Swedish colleague just said, these attacks are unacceptable and must stop immediately. The rocket and mortar attacks were the beginning of a day of attacks and counter-attacks — the heaviest since the hostilities in 2014.

Yesterday's events showed again how fragile the situation is and how quickly things can spiral out of control. Yesterday's events followed weeks of protests, with more protests announced. We must prevent new and further escalation. We once again call on all parties to exercise restraint and to prevent incidents that would put the lives of both Palestinians and Israeli civilians at risk. Civilians on both sides of the fence on the Gaza border should not have to live in fear.

That brings me to my second point, the crisis in Gaza, which has been discussed recently in the Chamber on several occasions. We welcome the consensus in the Council that the situation is most concerning and needs to be addressed. Now the challenge before us is to come to consensus on how the Council should act.

We welcome the initiative taken by Mr. Mladenov to come up with a plan to fast-track urgently needed projects for water, energy and health. For that approach to succeed, the combined effort of the international community and the cooperation of all parties is needed. Crises should not be treated as an excuse to delay further action. On the contrary, they are an extra reason to redouble efforts to improve living conditions on the ground.

In that regard, we reiterate our support for an appropriate public statement by the Council on the current crisis. The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes the initiatives taken by members to address parts of the puzzle. We thank Kuwait in particular for its efforts in that regard. We should be able to come to a statement that does justice to our shared concerns.

A sustainable political solution is needed to the humanitarian crisis for the security of Palestinian and Israeli civilians. The Kingdom of the Netherlands supports the Egyptian initiatives to achieve a return of the Palestinian Authority as the legitimate Government in Gaza, and we welcome Egypt's constructive role in maintaining calm between the parties.

That brings me to my third point, on the worrisome developments in the West Bank. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is deeply concerned by the intention of the Israeli authorities to enforce the demolition of all structures in the Khan Al-Ahmar community. The Kingdom of the Netherlands stresses that Area C is of critical importance for the viability of a future Palestinian State in the context of the two-State solution. We recall that demolitions and confiscations of homes and humanitarian assets and the obstruction of the delivery of humanitarian assistance are contrary to Israel's obligations under international law.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands condemns the announced plans to approve new settlement expansion. The continued Israeli settlement activity is illegal under international law. It remains an obstacle to peace, as reaffirmed by resolution 2334 (2016).

In conclusion, this week has shown that on both sides steps are taken that undermine the viability of the two-State solution. This week's events are an alarming reminder that the current status quo is unsustainable. We call upon all parties to reverse these trends and to take positive steps that contribute to the possibility of sustainable peace. We call upon all parties to make the two-State solution possible.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the United States for having requested this important meeting. We also express our appreciation to Mr. Nickolay Mladenov for his briefing.

Equatorial Guinea has been monitoring with great concern the escalation of violence and rhetoric in the region. We condemn all violence by any actors. We

condemn and deem any attack against civilians — in any form — unacceptable and reprehensible.

In that connection, Equatorial Guinea welcomes the efforts of the Arab Republic of Egypt to mediate the tension that has arisen between the Israeli forces and the Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip. We regret that, despite the repeated appeal of the members of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, as well as other actors of the international community, we must meet again today for the same acts of violence.

Today, as we have done for the past two weeks, we are discussing violence in Gaza. Last week, Mr. Mladenov alerted us of the possibility of Gaza collapsing. Regrettably, we are now confronting exchanges of attacks between the parties, rather than brokering a solution to the situation.

My delegation yet again calls on all parties to exercise restraint and to refrain from acts that could aggravate the already complex situation. The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea always advocates for a negotiated solution to any conflict or problem that may arise, however difficult and complicated it may be. The position of our Government in this case is no different. Therefore, we invite the parties to do their best to normalize the situation and to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population.

It is critical to ease the humanitarian situation in Gaza. We also believe it is important and call upon Palestinians to honour the reconciliation pact. If that had occurred, the Palestinian Authority would already control the Gaza Strip. We also call upon the Israeli authorities to use proportionate force in their legitimate self-defence.

In conclusion, I reaffirm our position, based on the standards and principles of international law, Security Council resolutions, the declarations of the African Union and the Arab Peace Initiative, which refer to the solution of two independent States — one Israeli and the other Palestinian — living in peace and security, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States. We believe that Israelis, Palestinians and any just mediator must respect such results. We therefore urge the international community to continue its efforts to restart dialogue between the parties and to avoid actions that could undermine the peaceful coexistence of Israelis and Palestinians.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Poland.

At the outset, let me thank the Special Coordinator, Mr. Mladenov, for his account of the latest developments on the ground. Poland condemns in the strongest terms the rocket attacks targeting the civilian communities in southern Israel, carried out by militant groups from the Gaza Strip. There is no justification under any circumstances for indiscriminate and deliberate acts of violence against the civilian population. They are unacceptable. They must stop and never be repeated again. Both Israelis and Palestinians have a right to live in peace and safety.

We concur with Special Coordinator Mladenov that such attacks undermine the efforts to improve the situation in Gaza. We strongly urge the parties to exercise the utmost restraint and to refrain from any actions that may lead to a further escalation of the situation and may endanger the safety of civilians.

We call upon all actors to ensure the protection of civilians, particularly children. In that respect, we reiterate our appeal to all parties to strictly comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): At the outset, I want to thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing. We would also like to thank the many Council members who have on principle defended the truth and demonstrated that they have memories extending beyond the past 24 hours.

Time and time again we have come to the Security Council to appeal to its members to act with responsibility, in line with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Council's own numerous resolutions, to address the dire situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Today is no different, as we continue to face a protracted and deepening protection crisis, a human rights crisis and a justice crisis and their devastating impact on our people.

We come again to this Chamber two weeks following the 14 May massacre by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip

and following a barrage of Israeli military strikes against Gaza in the past 24 hours that have heightened tensions and are a cause for alarm, creating even greater urgency to reign in Israel's warmongering and defuse the current crisis.

Faced with the potential of yet another act of savage Israeli aggression against the occupied, besieged and blockaded Gaza Strip, we must make the same appeal we made two weeks ago (see S/PV.8256) and at all prior junctures: we urge the Council to act now to de-escalate this dangerous situation, to avert a descent into more violence and chaos and to prevent the occupying Power from further terrorizing the Palestinian civilian population and endangering innocent civilian lives.

Once again, we plead with the Council to act to save civilian lives and to respond to such threats to international peace and security. We call on the Council to protect the defenceless, to stand firmly on the side of international law, with a steady moral compass, and not to fall prey to the cynical narrative that is constantly dragging us to the brink of war and thwarting all efforts to find a just solution to this horrific injustice.

We totally reject that narrative driven by Israel, the occupying Power, which remains unrelenting in its attempts to obscure and distort the realities we face, repeatedly casting itself as the victim when it is in fact the occupier, aggressor and oppressor and has appointed itself judge, jury and executioner of the Palestinian people — international law and human rights be damned, and no less the authority and credibility of the Security Council.

It is our hope that such strong messages will reinforce the efforts under way to ensure a ceasefire for the sake of saving civilian lives and sparing our people further suffering and yet another month of Ramadan filled with anguish and despair. We hope that the ceasefire holds, and we commend the serious efforts of Egypt in that regard, in addition to its efforts on Palestinian reconciliation.

We appeal for conscience and reason to prevail. We cannot act as though further escalation and deterioration of the situation are inevitable; they are not. We must act to avert the worst-case scenarios, for the risks are immense.

The international community and, at the forefront, the Security Council, long ago created the tools and laws both to prevent and resolve conflict, as well as to ensure the protection of civilians. It is past high time to use those tools and to implement those laws when it comes to Palestine. The exceptionalism and impunity too long accorded to Israel must stop.

It is time to stop making excuses for why the time is not right or why it is not possible or convenient to act, while continually absolving Israel of its crimes and facilitating its evasion of accountability, when so many human lives are at stake, and indeed the existence of an entire nation is at stake. It is time for the Security Council to act to ensure international protection for the Palestinian people for as long as this illegal, abhorrent Israeli occupation continues and their rights continue to be violated, including the rights of our refugees.

The draft resolution that has been presented to Council members by our brothers in Kuwait, as the Arab representative on the Council, represents a modest, first step in that regard, and we urge everyone to support it. It is inexcusable for the international community to continue standing idly by, expressing only regret yet failing to act, even as the rights, safety, well-being and dignity of our people continue to be so grossly and systematically violated by what amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

As many Council members have said, it is time to address the root causes and underlying issues of this situation, not just the symptoms or a few selective events. It has been repeatedly stated in these halls that the Palestine question remains a litmus test for the efficacy of international law and the international system's authority, and that the failure to justly resolve it remains a stain on the international conscience. It is time to right that historic wrong.

The harsh lessons of the past should have been learned by now. Proper redress that is just, comprehensive and lasting can be found only on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the long-standing international consensus; it cannot be detached from them in a politicized and biased manner.

We have been brought to this Chamber today precisely because of the constant mistake of detaching developments from the root causes and the reality of the existence of the Israeli occupation, dispossession and colonization of the Palestinian people and their land by the most forceful and repressive means, in grave breach of international law. That detachment is most often coupled with erroneous attempts, including malicious propaganda by Israel, to characterize the situation as

being one of terrorism, while completely twisting the facts and undermining efforts, including by concerned States and the United Nations, to address the many serious issues before us.

Accusations of a double standard when it comes to the question of Palestine, regrettably, are not new in this Chamber, and they will only be reinforced by the hypocrisy on display today, namely, bringing us here to address the recent Israeli air strikes and rocket attacks from Gaza when the grave events that preceded, and may follow, remain unaddressed as the Council continues to be paralysed, and therefore prevented from carrying out its esponsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations.

It is hard to understand the attempts for a reaction from the Council to yesterday's events, as if those events are somehow unrelated to those that preceded, including when three previous attempts, led again by our brothers from Kuwait, for an appropriate Council reaction to the killing, injuring and maiming of Palestinian civilians by the Israeli occupying forces were summarily blocked by one Council member.

Perhaps some have already forgotten the slaughter of unarmed Palestinian civilians, including innocent children, that was committed on 14 May — the same date as the provocative and unlawful transfer of the United States Embassy to Jerusalem. Perhaps they have forgotten that Israeli soldiers perched at Gaza's borders deliberately shot at peaceful protesters from hundreds of meters away, in a craven and punitive show of force that obviously intended to cause bodily harm and death and sow fear and terror among the population.

But we have not forgotten, and neither have the families who are today mourning, and will forever mourn, the 118 Palestinians killed, among them 15 children, since the Great March of Return protests began on 30 March. Nor has it been forgotten by the thousands who have been injured by the Israeli occupying forces. They number at least 13,000 civilians, including children, women, medics and journalists, among them thousands still in need of surgery and medical treatment, and hundreds who have been disabled for life.

They were pleading for their voices to be heard, their human rights to be respected and an end to the miserable isolation and desolation imposed on them by more than a decade of the Israeli blockade and wars and a dire humanitarian crisis that is worsening by the day. Yet Israel chose to silence them, as usual deciding to respond with a heavy hand by using lethal and indiscriminate force against thousands of peaceful civilian protesters and setting off another cycle of violence.

Our people have remained bravely steadfast and resilient in the face of all of that. But the suffocating Israeli blockade has depleted their coping capacities and intensified their despair. Their suffering endures in a multitude of agonizing ways, as they continue to be denied even the most basic life needs — a constant reminder of the occupation's cruelty and criminality. Do not minimize their suffering: it is deep, traumatic and unbearable. It is the incubator in which anger and bitterness fester and hopes diminish, especially among the youth, for a more peaceful and just future in the glaring absence of accountability and genuine remedies for their plight, including in the immediate term for an end to Israel's punitive and inhumane blockade.

That is the backdrop and context for recent developments. The events of the past days did not occur in a vacuum. The latest cycle of violence has been fuelled and incited by a series of Israeli acts of aggression and rhetoric, particularly from 30 March onwards, including the massacre on 14 May and the killing of three other Palestinians by Israeli forces on 28 May, just prior to yesterday's escalation.

We reiterate what has been repeatedly affirmed by the Palestinian leadership, including President Mahmoud Abbas: we do not condone and we reject and condemn all violence against civilians. International law must be respected by all and under all circumstances. I challenge those who have memories from 24 hours ago to repeat that same commitment of condemning the killing of all civilians from all sides for whatever reasons to also include the Palestinian civilians. We have no problem whatsoever with the application of international law to our situation, as long as it is applied evenly, fairly, consistently and judiciously at all times, not selectively and not as a means to exempt Israel from the law and absolve it of its crimes, while it manipulates the law to suit its distorted narrative and unlawful claims.

At the same time, we remain insistent that all people seek, and are entitled to, security. Israel cannot claim exclusivity to the right to security; the Palestinian people also have a right to security. We cannot be excluded from that. Only the Israelis currently have security and we have no right whatsoever to it. Security

should be for all, including the Palestinians. Attempts to justify illegal actions in occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, under the pretext of security are totally unacceptable. Equally, we firmly reject attempts to frame that issue as one of terrorism. The lines should never be blurred between actions that can be taken by States to ensure security, as per the Charter and international law, on the one hand, and actions that are in violation of the law and fundamental human rights and constitute war crimes, on the other.

Faced with that reality, we will persist with our efforts to secure protection for the Palestinian people to ensure their safety and well-being, in accordance with international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law. We appeal to Council members to favourably consider the draft resolution now being negotiated, with the aim of addressing the protection needs of our occupied and besieged people.

While we continue our endeavours in that regard, alongside all of our efforts to realize justice and fulfil the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and freedom, we call on the Security Council to act, in line with its legal obligations, resolutions and commitments, to address the crisis and reinforce our faith in international law, including for the protection of the most vulnerable among us.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Danon (Israel): I thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing, as well as Ambassador Haley and the United States for calling for this emergency meeting of the Security Council. It is not often that the Council calls for an emergency meeting following a provocation by Hamas; today's meeting marks a concrete step in the right direction. But today we need action. The Council must act on the opportunity presented to it.

In response to the most severe attack by Hamas and Islamic Jihad since the 2014 Operation Protective Edge, the Security Council must take two decisive actions: the first is to condemn Hamas for its war crimes against Israelis and Palestinians, and the second is to adopt a resolution designating Hamas as a terrorist organization, exactly as it did with Al-Qaida and with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS).

Let us review the facts. Over the past 24 hours, Hamas and Islamic Jihad fired nearly 200 rockets and mortar shells from the Gaza Strip into nearby Israeli towns and villages. The terrorists began their attacks on Tuesday, just as parents were preparing their young children for the school day.

I will share with the Council a chilling example. During the assault, a mortar shell exploded in the yard of a kindergarten, damaging the structure. By sheer luck, the kindergarten was empty, and no one was hurt. But that attack was a war crime. The deliberate goal of the terrorists was to kill civilians.

We have warned the Council of Hamas's intentions time and again. We have explained the imminent danger posed by the coordinated and violent riots that Hamas has orchestrated along the security fence. The mob, incited and paid by Hamas, attempted to breach the fence by force, opened fire at our soldiers and detonated explosives. Hamas terrorists even set fire to the Kerem Shalom civilian border crossing, a crossing designated for food and humanitarian goods to enter Gaza.

The latest attacks of the past 24 hours — the firing of shells and rockets at our citizens and the destruction of major electricity infrastructure for Gaza — only confirm our countless warnings that Hamas not only seeks to instil fear in the hearts of Israelis, but that it could not care less about the Palestinians whom it controls in Gaza.

In response to these terror attacks, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have targeted Hamas and Islamic Jihad's terror infrastructure. We also destroyed the tenth Hamas terror attack tunnel uncovered in Gaza since October. The IDF destroyed that tunnel, which began in Gaza, wove through Egypt and ended right in southern Israel, near the Kerem Shalom civilian crossing. Like all of Hamas's terror tunnels, this one, too, was intended to infiltrate Israel and harm as many civilians as possible. But this terror tunnel also had a second purpose: to smuggle weapons weapons into Egypt from Gaza.

Iran's role in this latest unrest should not be ignored. It is Iranian money that is used to pay the Hamas rioters on the fence, and it is Iranian rockets that were fired at our towns. Just like in Syria and Lebanon, wherever there is terror and violence in our region, there is Iran. Hamas is no different. No matter which tactic it chooses, whether it is suicide bombers, rioters at the fence or rockets and missiles, when Hamas has the opportunity to harm innocent people, it does not hold back. That is its sickening ideology.

We have here a situation that is black and white. Israel disengaged from Gaza in 2005, as I keep reminding the Council. Hamas took over the following year and since then has done nothing but terrorize Israel and prolong the suffering of the people of Gaza. Let us not forget either that Hamas continues to hold the bodies of two Israeli soldiers, Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul, and two Israeli civilians, Avera Mengistu and Hisham al-Sayed. We will not rest until they have returned home.

Let me remind the Council that the situation in Gaza today is the direct result of Hamas's refusal to renounce violence. Let me also remind it that the Quartet conditions, put forward by the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations, were very clear about the need to renounce violence as a means of achieving goals.

We have said it time and again: if there were no terror, there would be no restrictions, and it is the people of Gaza who would benefit most. Even today, when the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, advocates for civilian projects in Gaza, it is Hamas that destroys those prospects. It is Israel that attaches great importance to the international efforts to assist Gaza's economy and development.

Hamas destroys civilian infrastructure because it does not want the people of Gaza to live in peace. Hamas has carried out endless terror attacks against Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza, and the past 24 hours have been no different.

There is no moral equivalence; there is not even a question of morality. Some cynical members of the Council are circulating a shameful draft resolution that does not even mention Hamas. Look at the draft: the idea that Hamas's violence could be rewarded by a resolution condemning Israel is absurd.

Every member of the Council needs to ask itself how it could possibly support a draft resolution that condemns Israel but does not even mention Hamas once. Members should read the draft tonight; they are going to vote on it. Maybe they can help me find the word "Hamas" in it. How many times is Israel mentioned? Hamas, not even once. What hypocrisy.

If this body does not issue a clear condemnation of Hamas, it will raise the question of whether this body is capable of protecting innocent life against terror. The key step is to accept reality: that Hamas is a terrorist organization, nothing less. Terrorist organizations must be designated as such by the Security Council. Designating Hamas as a terrorist organization would enable the Council to sanction its leaders, its members and every person or entity with which it associates. It is a designation that would result in countless lives saved.

It is high time that the international community combat Hamas with the same tools and vigour that it uses against Al-Qaida and ISIS. Let me be clear: if Israeli children cannot sleep quietly at night, then the terrorists of Gaza will feel the might of the IDF. We will not allow anyone to harm our citizens, and we will do all that is necessary to defend them.

We ask the Security Council to have the courage and the moral clarity to take the following actions: condemn Hamas and designate it as a terrorist organization recognized by the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8273

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8273rd meeting

Thursday, 31 May 2018, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Wronecka	(Poland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Michon
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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18-16538 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/515, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

I shall now give the floor to those members who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): What would members of the Security Council say if they were sitting across the table from a rape survivor in a protection-of-civilians site? What would they say to the countless women who had to witness their own husbands and children being shot right in front of them? What would they say to the two brothers who were forced to watch as those fighters gang-raped their mother and then were forced to actually take turns shooting at their mother until she was dead?

Those are not hypotheticals. Those are the stories of real people whom I saw and heard when I visited South Sudan. That is the sad reality because the leaders of South Sudan have failed to protect them. Those stories are not exceptional. Those kinds of horrific abuses happen all too frequently in South Sudan. Armed groups, including Government forces, are assaulting, robbing and slaughtering civilians almost every single day. Four million people have been displaced by fighting, another 2.5 million people have become refugees, and the fighting is getting worse.

Multiple United Nations special representatives described in a statement what has happened in recent weeks.

> "Testimonies indicate that women and girls of all ages have been subjected to rape, including pregnant women, lactating mothers and girls as young as 4-years-old."

In another case, young soldiers attacked the island of Meer in former Unity state. Women, children and the elderly were slaughtered. Other civilians drowned while trying to flee, including children. Again I would ask, what would each of us say to those people?

We should be telling them that we will do everything possible to help protect them and stop their suffering. We should be explaining to the people of South Sudan that the Security Council will take decisive action to hold their leaders accountable for those atrocities. We should be putting real pressure on them to end the fighting.

The Security Council has not imposed an arms embargo, even though the need is obvious. The Council has not sanctioned a single individual since 2015, even as the violence associated with the renewed civil war has killed thousands of people. The South Sudanese Government actually promoted one of the handful of individuals the Council previously sanctioned to the position of Chief of the Defence Forces. That is not just an insult to the Council, it is a farce. The United States has lost its patience. The status quo is unacceptable. It is long past time for all of us to demand better for the South Sudanese people. I for one went to South Sudan with an open mind. I had a genuine conversation with President Salva Kiir, and since then all we have been asked to do is wait. We are told more time is necessary for talks, or more time is necessary before the Council will be able to impose sanctions. But all we see on the ground is more fighting and more atrocities.

Last December the parties in South Sudan signed the agreement on the cessation of hostilities. A few days ago they supposedly recommitted to that agreement with church leaders. So far, those are just words on paper. The parties have violated that agreement from day one. Neither the Intergovernmental Authority on Development nor the African Union have applied consequences for the violators. What we need now is concrete action by the full international community to hold the warring parties accountable. The draft resolution before us today (S/2018/515) is a modest step in that direction. It extends the sanctions regime for 45 days. It demands that the parties fully adhere to the cessation of hostilities. We hope they seize this opportunity for the sake of the South Sudanese people.

This is a draft resolution that we should all support. We urge Council members to use this time to think about the reality of life in South Sudan. I have said

often that my fear when it comes to South Sudan is that the children are growing up uneducated, unskilled and resentful. That will be the issue of each one of us when they become adults. Those children deserve a brighter future and, in the face of such barbaric violence, the Council's failure to act denies them that future. I do not think any of us could look a survivor of this conflict in the eye and say the right thing to do today was to delay. We must stop making excuses and take real steps to end the conflict instead. I for one cannot justify anything else.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): The situation in South Sudan worries all of us, in particular those of us in the region. We fully understand the gravity of the situation, and we share the pain and suffering of the South Sudanese people. However, we also know that the seemingly unsurmountable multifaceted problems facing the country can be addressed only through an all-inclusive political process. We have made some undeniable progress in that regard. It is understandable if the seriousness of the South Sudanese parties and the slow pace of the peace process are creating a lot of frustration. We in the region are also extremely frustrated. However, as much as we understand the frustration of the many who have done a great deal to help the people of South Sudan, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is at the critical moment of concluding the High-Level Revitalization Forum and presenting its bridging proposal. The adoption of the draft resolution before us (S/2018/515) would be detrimental to the process. It is a very tragic development indeed.

There has been a clear understanding on the part of IGAD, the African Union (AU) and the United Nations that there is a need to coordinate efforts to push the peace process forward and achieve the desired result. That unity of purpose and complementarity of efforts is what has been dictating everything we do in IGAD. The Security Council taking action now without synchronizing or calibrating its position regarding the AU would not only be unhelpful, it would also seriously undermine the peace process at a time when there are encouraging signs that a political outcome involving compromise could be within reach. The possibility that the peace process might collapse totally as a consequence of this cannot be ruled out. And we mean that. Those who are closer to the problem might also be closer to the truth.

What is more ironic is that the draft resolution before us for adoption comes at a time when IGAD has reaffirmed its commitment to take targeted measures against parties and individuals who are found to be spoilers, and this was also reinforced by the African Union. The IGAD Council of Ministers convened in an extraordinary meeting today, and it deliberated on those issues on the basis of the report provided by the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism. What was evident in the outcome of that meeting was IGAD's resolve to take punitive measures against commanders who are directly involved and those who are found to be violating the cessation of hostilities agreement.

An IGAD Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government is also expected to be held soon. It therefore would have been logical and sensible for the Council to adopt a short, technical extension of the sanctions regime and drop the annex for now in order to give IGAD a chance during this critical moment in the peace process. Waiting two months would not have caused the sky to fall. We have been working with the penholder and all other members on the issue, and we have been trying to convey this message in good faith over the past couple of days. At the moment, we know that the draft resolution on the table does not enjoy the support of IGAD or the African Union. It also does not enjoy consensus among Council members. We know that a Council divided on this issue will not be helpful to the peace process, and it will not send the right message to the parties. That is what we have been trying to avoid. That is also why we have been working with the penholder in good faith and in a spirit of cooperation. Unfortunately, our concerns have not been fully taken into account, and we are forced to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution. In fact, that is the least we could do.

We seek the support and understanding of members of the Council because we feel we have the responsibility as Chair of IGAD and as the country intimately involved in the mediation efforts. We are duty-bound to salvage the peace process in spite of the many challenges and difficulties. In conclusion, let me say that politics is the art of the possible. Diplomacy is not conducted to vent frustration. That is what this draft resolution is the result of.

As a matter of principle, IGAD has not said that sanctions should not be imposed; they should be. As we have stated, we will abstain in the voting on the

draft resolution because the text is manifestly harmful to the peace process. It undermines the efforts of the subregion, the region, IGAD and the AU. We only hope that it will not drive the parties away from the peace process.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Despite the efforts made by the parties during negotiations to broker an agreement, Equatorial Guinea simply cannot support the draft resolution (S/2018/515)submitted by the United States. We believe that the annex to the draft resolution, which includes a list of individuals on whom sanctions will be imposed, will hinder the negotiations taking place on the ground.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was mandated to mediate between the parties to the South Sudanese conflict. Until the African Union decides otherwise, we will maintain our trust in that organization as the most appropriate body for finding a negotiated political solution to the situation. Although we acknowledge the deadlock, we firmly believe that progress could be made in the coming months.

In a communiqué issued today, IGAD calls for additional time to conduct its work. We believe that it is important to grant that request. The commitment by the parties to holding a face-to-face meeting between President Salva Kiir and Mr. Machar just before the next African Union Summit, to be held in Mauritania, is a major achievement. The measures outlined in the text could leave the international community without valid interlocutors with whom to negotiate, which would inevitably have an adverse impact on the political process. We believe that dialogue must be given another opportunity.

With regard to the South Sudanese conflict, it must be stressed that we all agree that it is important to exert pressure on the parties to sit at the negotiating table and reach an agreement. The only difference is how and when. Equatorial Guinea asks our colleagues in the Security Council, as well as the international community, to be a bit more patient, for we recognize that the situation will not be resolved overnight. It is important to make optimal use of our time and not interfere in or disregard the legitimacy of the regional organizations the Security Council has continued to support.

If no progress is made in the coming months, IGAD has promised to submit specific proposals in an effort to put pressure on uncooperative parties and impose possible sanctions. We ask that IGAD be given a chance.

The President: The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Côte d'Ivoire, France, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation

The President: The draft resolution received nine votes in favour, none against and six abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2418 (2018).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of this important resolution (resolution 2418 (2018)).

The situation in South Sudan is appalling. Thousands have been killed. More than one fifth of the population is on the verge of famine, more than half is food-insecure and a third have fled their homes. Widespread human rights abuses continue to be reported. We strongly welcome and support regional efforts led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to revitalize the peace agreement and broker an agreement between the parties. But it is clear that the parties are still not prepared to compromise in the interest of peace.

Even while peace talks were taking place, violations of the cessation of hostilities continued. We have seen horrific reports of violence and human rights violations and abuse. Just today the media is reporting that the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism has recorded multiple ceasefire violations, allegations of gang rape, murdered children and the use of child soldiers. That cannot be allowed to continue.

It is clear that the solution to South Sudan's crisis is lasting peace. I agree with my colleague from Ethiopia about the need to address the problems of South Sudan through an all-inclusive political process. Without it suffering will spread and the consequences will endure for many years to come. Genuine compromise is essential to secure a political agreement that stands the test of time.

The United Kingdom believes that resolution 2418 (2018) is an important step in increasing the pressure on the parties to compromise in the interest of peace and in the interest of the people of South Sudan. The Security Council has today shown that it will act. Let that be a clear message to the parties and to those who wish to prevent peace going forward.

I acknowledge that it is unfortunate that the Council could not agree unanimously today, but I believe that we are united in our vision for South Sudan. I believe we all remain supportive of IGAD and its work. Let us therefore not cease in our resolve to find peace or give any comfort to those who oppose it.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): On 21 December last year, the parties to the conflict in South Sudan agreed on a cessation of hostilities. The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomed it as a positive step towards a political solution. But it was just days, perhaps even hours, before the fighting resumed. Once again we saw the leaders of South Sudan choose war over peace, despite calls by the Security Council, the region, civil society organizations and, most important, the people of South Sudan.

Choosing war over peace must stop. That is why we voted in favour of resolution 2418 (2018). Today the Council sent a strong message to all parties in South Sudan, stressing that there is an urgent need for a full commitment to the cessation of hostilities, an urgent need for a full commitment to a political agreement and an urgent need for a full commitment to the well-being of the people of South Sudan. If the parties in South Sudan continue to behave solely based on their narrow self-interests, the Council will consider serious consequences.

We regret that the unanimous adoption of the resolution was not possible. We believe that it would have been possible had the Council been granted additional time for full engagement through closer cooperation with the region.

The resolution has now been adopted. We thank the Intergovernmental Authority on Development for its continuous leadership, and we join it in urging all parties to the High-Level Revitalization Forum to negotiate in good faith and make real compromises. It is now up to the leaders of South Sudan to show that they are serious about peace, about finding a political solution and about the well-being of the people of South Sudan.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): The millions of South Sudanese caught up in this brutal conflict have waited too long for their leaders to bring about an end to the fighting. Despite the efforts of the region to broker an agreement, the parties have not made the compromises necessary to set the country on a path towards peace, reconciliation and recovery. Instead of engaging constructively and in good faith in the negotiations at the High-Level Revitalization Forum, the parties have continued to advance their interests through military means.

Harrowing reports of violence against civilians, including widespread sexual and gender-based violence, continue to emerge from South Sudan. Violations and abuses of international human rights law and of international humanitarian law must come to an end.

With other members of the Security Council, we share a deep sense of frustration at the intransigence of the leaders of South Sudan. The Council stated its determination to ensure that the parties abide by their obligations and responsibilities in our presidential statement of 14 December 2017 (S/PRST/2017/25). The repeated violations of commitments by the parties must have consequences. Resolution 2418 (2018), adopted today, sets out clear conditions and deadlines for the parties, adding international pressure to regional efforts. It is for that reason that we voted in favour of it.

At the same time, we deeply regret that the Council was not able to adopt the resolution by consensus. We worked actively with members to find agreement on a text that would have garnered greater support. To that end, we believe that the resolution could have been better coordinated with ongoing efforts in the region.

A regionally brokered and inclusive political solution remains the only viable means of achieving peace in South Sudan. We call on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the wider region to continue efforts towards such a political solution. In that regard, we welcome the outcome of the

IGAD Council of Ministers meeting today. To give the peace effort the best possible prospect for success, it is imperative that we now stand unified and speak with a single voice to the parties.

Today's resolution presents a clear choice for the parties. We urge them to immediately respect the cessation of hostilities agreement and urgently engage in good faith on reaching a viable political agreement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation abstained in the voting on resolution 2418 (2018), on extending sanctions against South Sudan.

We are concerned by the security situation in the country and by the fact that, despite the December 2017 agreement, there has been continuing fighting in the country. We call on the South Sudanese parties to quickly find a compromise solution in the interests of the entire South Sudanese population.

Nonetheless, we believe that it is wrong-headed to threaten the introduction of sanctions against those high-ranking individuals who were involved in the negotiation process at an important moment for the completion of the latest round of the High-Level Revitalization Forum on the peace agreement, sponsored by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). We are of the view that the Forum currently represents a unique arena in the attempt to find a political solution to the conflict in South Sudan. We therefore believe that it is important to provide genuine support to IGAD's mediation efforts. We think the imposition of artificial timelines or deadlines for the negotiation process, or measures adopted that conflict with positions expressed by regional players, is unacceptable.

On the whole, we continue to doubt that the introduction of sanctions against members of the Government and an arms embargo on South Sudan could play a positive role in reaching a political settlement and normalizing the situation from a security point of view. During the course of work on a new sanctions draft resolution in July, we will also proceed from the position that it is unacceptable to have any preordained stance on broadening sanctions.

Finally, we categorically reject what we believe to be the penholders' damaging and disrespectful position towards their colleagues in the Security Council, once again imposing a too-strict time frame on the Council, which is simply unacceptable when taking such far-reaching decisions on sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The South Sudanese political process is currently in a critical phase. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union (AU), and countries of the region are stepping up their mediation efforts, and various parties within South Sudan are actively engaged in dialogue and consultation. It behooves the international community to have due regard for, and carefully listen to, the views of the country in question, regional organizations and other countries in the region, jointly support the mediation efforts of regional organizations and help the parties in South Sudan return to trying to reach a political settlement with a view to stabilizing the situation and putting the country on an expeditious path towards development.

China has maintained a consistent position on the issue of sanctions based on the belief that sanctions are a means to an end, not an end in and of themselves. The Security Council should exercise great caution in implementing sanctions, and its action ought to help advance the political settlement process in South Sudan and lend support to the good offices and mediation efforts of regional organizations, such as IGAD and the AU.

However, the annex to resolution 2418 (2018), just adopted, includes some high-ranking officials of the Government of South Sudan on the proposed sanctions list and threatens an arms embargo. Given the current circumstances, those elements are not conducive to furthering the political peace process in South Sudan and could further complicate the situation. There was also no consensus within the Security Council or among the countries of the region.

In the light of these considerations, China abstained in the voting on resolution. China hope that the members of the Security Council will continue to engage in consultations on relevant issues, with a view to finding a proper solution and joining forces with the South Sudanese parties, regional organizations and countries of the region in order to move to peace process in South Sudan forward. We stand ready to work with the international community and continue to play a constructive role in bringing lasting peace and stability to South Sudan.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Committed as it is to the people of South Sudan and to the political process led by the relevant regional organizations, Bolivia would like to explain its vote today.

Our abstention in the voting on resolution 2418 (2018) responds to specific elements that were not taken into account by the penholders with respect to the list of persons identified in the annex, which had been brought to their attention by several delegations. As we have said before on several occasions, we supports the legal waiting period before adopting measures, including sanctions measures, against those who violate cessation of hostilities agreements and obstruct peace processes. Such decisions, which are relevant not only for South Sudan but also for the region, must be agreed in principle in conjunction with the relevant regional and subregional organizations.

We would like to also express our concern that the resolution was not adopted by unanimity. The Security Council is not sending the right message. We believe that the Council should stay united behind the political process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Of course, today's decision weakens that position.

Finally, we welcome the IGAD Council of Ministers communiqué issued after the meeting held today in Addis Ababa. We reiterate that the only solution to this conflict is through the political process currently being led by IGAD.

Mr. Michon (France) (*spoke in French*): The Security Council just adopted resolution 2418 (2018), which renews the sanctions regime on South Sudan. France voted in favour of the resolution, which should help to put an end to the violence in South Sudan and to advance the political process.

The international community and the Council could not — cannot — remain impassive in the face of the clashes on the ground in the past few months and the continuous violations of human rights. In that connection, we welcome the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) through the High-level Revitalization Forum to bring the parties back together and find a political solution. However, we regret that the parties did not seize upon that opportunity to reach a political agreement that would provide peace prospects for South Sudan and its long-suffering people.

The parties must now take advantage of the coming weeks to reach an adequate political agreement. Today's resolution should make them aware of their responsibility in that regard. The international community must stay fully mobilized to promote favourable conditions for peace and security in South Sudan. IGAD, the African Union and regional and international partners, as well as the Council, have a role to play. The coming weeks will be pivotal for South Sudan.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan is deeply concerned that, despite the signing of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities, the protection of civilians and humanitarian access, as well as numerous calls from the Security Council and all signatories, we continue to receive reports of continuing military actions and flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. Moreover, the parties to the conflict have not made sufficient compromises to overcome the outstanding issues on governance and security matters.

We therefore express our readiness to discuss appropriate additional measures by the Council against those who violate the agreement. However, the position of countries in the region and regional organizations, namely, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU), should be taken into account in the Council's deliberations on such measures. We all support a bigger role for regional organizations in the work of the Security Council. Our delegation abstained in the voting on resolution 2418 (2018) because the positions and concerns of the countries of the region with regard to the timing of such actions were not adequately reflected. We support the idea of postponing the Council's new measures and giving IGAD some additional time to realize the objectives of the High-level Revitalization Forum process.

It is of critical importance that the Council remain united in supporting the efforts of IGAD and the AU. We should give Government officials as a party to negotiations the chance to achieve the desired progress, and we strongly urge them to do so. We welcome the decisions set out in the communiqué of the Extraordinary Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers on the situation in South Sudan, adopted today, and hope that the parties will be able to reconcile their differences and make significant progress on bridging proposals on governance and security issues. This is a wake-up call for the Government to be proactive and

to genuinely engage in the peace process. Otherwise, the consequences of inaction and further delays will be dire for the Government, which was put on notice today with the adoption of the resolution. However, we are against the annex and including the names of the officials before we see the results.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): Allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, at the end of your duties as the President of the Security Council for this month. Your tenure was indeed full and eventful. Also, we would like to congratulate Poland for joining the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Partners Forum. We look forward to your upcoming visit to South Sudan.

I would also like to thank the countries that have abstained from supporting resolution 2418 (2018) because the peace process in South Sudan is at a critical juncture right now. There is a light at the end of the tunnel, and the annex to the resolution is unfortunate and unhelpful. The danger is that it might not produce the desired result for those who supported the resolution. Nevertheless, the Government of South Sudan will work with the region to achieve lasting peace for the people of South Sudan.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to convey my sincere thanks to the members of the Security Council, as this is probably the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of May. On behalf of my colleagues in the Polish delegation, I would like to express the sincere appreciation to all of the members of the Security Council, especially my colleagues the Permanent Representatives — excellent diplomats — and the experts and colleagues from the Council's secretariat for their support. Indeed, it was a busy month. I hope that we managed to reach consensus from time to time. Personally, I felt all of their support and it was an extremely enriching experience. I learned a lot, but I hope I was also able to deliver results. Without everyone's contribution and without everyone's open heart and spirit, we could never have achieved what we achieved. I should also mention the interpreters in the Chamber, whose role is crucial. I thank them for their work. This was an extremely interesting adventure.

As the Russian presidency approaches, on behalf of the entire Council, I wish our colleagues from the Russian Federation good luck and great success. We return tomorrow under the auspices of their presidency.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8274

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8274th meeting
Friday, 1 June 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Nebenzia	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Security Council, to pay tribute to Her Excellency Ambassador Joanna Wronecka, Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations, for her service as President of the Council for the month of May. I am sure I speak for all members of the Security Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Wronecka and her team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Israel to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/516, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Kuwait. The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution.

I shall first give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. We wish you every success. I would also like to join you in expressing our thanks to Her Excellency Ambassador Joanna Wronecka of Poland for the outstanding professionalism she demonstrated in presiding over the Security Council last month, which was a very busy one.

In the past two weeks we have had two rounds of negotiations at the expert level with the participation of all the members of the Council, as well as meetings with all Member States, all of which have been extremely transparent, comprehensive and inclusive. We have listened to every proposed amendment and suggestion and have worked hard to take into account all the issues raised. We would like to thank all the members of the Council for their positive attitude and constructive participation in the preparation of draft resolution S/2018/516, which we are submitting for a vote today.

We urge all members to vote in favour of the draft resolution, the text of which has been agreed on and includes wording from previous resolutions and presidential statements. It calls on all the relevant parties to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including with regard to the protection of civilians, and reaffirms the importance of taking the necessary measures to save and protect civilians and hold all perpetrators of violations accountable. It highlights the need to respect international humanitarian law in all circumstances in line with common article 1 to the Geneva Conventions. It also calls upon the Secretary-General to investigate the recent events in the occupied territories and to submit a written report as soon as possible within 60 days from the adoption of the draft resolution, which should include, inter alia, proposals on the ways and means to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation, including recommendations on international protection mechanism.

In these critical circumstances, we again call upon Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I congratulate the Russian Federation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. I want to thank the Polish Mission for what it did last to help make everything go smoothly. Before I get started, I would like to clarify for my Kuwaiti colleague that they did not take into account everyone's edits, because we had quite a few, and there were concerns in the Security Council at the fact that Hamas was not mentioned in the draft resolution (S/2018/516).

The draft resolution presented by Kuwait represents a grossly one-sided view of what has taken place in Gaza in recent weeks. Anyone who cares about the peace process should vote against it. But make no

mistake: regardless of how others choose to vote, the United States will oppose the draft resolution and we will veto it if we must.

The terrorist group Hamas bears primary responsibility for the awful living conditions in Gaza. It is Hamas that has served as the de facto Government of Gaza for last 11 years. It is Hamas that has consistently diverted humanitarian assistance into military infrastructure, building rockets instead of schools and terror tunnels instead of hospitals. It is Hamas that has attacked the very humanitarian access points into Gaza that are lifelines for the Palestinian people. It is Hamas and its allies that fired rockets — at least 70 of them this week alone, indiscriminately — into Israeli communities. It is Hamas that has incited violent acts at the boundary fence, purposely infiltrating its terrorist fighters among civilians and deliberately using innocent people as human shields. It is Hamas that openly calls for the destruction of the State of Israel. It is Hamas that refuses to cooperate with the Palestinian Authority to unite in the pursuit of peace. And yet Kuwait's draft resolution makes no mention of Hamas, none at all.

Instead the draft resolution places all the blame on Israel. Kuwait actually blames Israel for Hamas firing rockets onto a kindergarten playground in Israel. It conveniently ignores the fact that there is not one single Israeli settlement or soldier in Gaza — there have not been any since 2005. It ignores the fact that, according to Hamas officials themselves, the majority of those killed by Israeli Defence Forces in recent weeks were members of the Hamas terrorist group, not peaceful civilians. Finally, the draft resolution perpetuates the bias towards Israel that has long been the hallmark of the United Nations.

It is draft resolutions like this one that undermine the credibility of the United Nations in dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Because this draft resolution is wildly inaccurate in its characterization of recent events in Gaza and because it would harm any efforts aimed at achieving peace, the United States will oppose it and will veto it if necessary. But there is an alternative.

For those who are able to bring themselves to recognize the reality that Hamas terrorism is a considerable factor in the recent unrest and for the terrible conditions in Gaza, we are offering a separate draft resolution (S/2018/520). This draft resolution rightly places responsibility where it belongs. It includes many features that Kuwait's draft resolution lacks. It condemns the indiscriminate firing of rockets by Hamas against Israeli civilian communities. It condemns Hamas diversion of resources into military infrastructure. It demands that Hamas stop its deliberate efforts to put Palestinian civilians at risk at the boundary fence. By offering this draft resolution, we are giving members of the Security Council additional options.

They can choose to condemn the terrorists who are responsible for inciting violence in Gaza and against condemning a country for acting in self-defence, just as any of us would do. They can choose to cast their votes in ways that condemn both parties or neither party. Finally, they can make the choice to vote in favour of the Kuwaiti draft resolution and against the American draft resolution. In doing that, they would make it clear that they believe that all responsibility lies with Israel and none lies with the Hamas terrorist group.

The situation in Gaza is truly tragic. No one should have to live in such conditions. The United States remains fully determined to pursue a long-term peace agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Such an agreement would benefit the entire Middle East region, and most especially the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. But a necessary precondition for peace is recognition of reality. One of those realities is that Hamas is a major impediment to peace. It is in charge of Gaza and it uses its resources not to help the people of Gaza but to wage war against Israel.

Another reality is when the United Nations sides with terrorists over Israel, as the Kuwaiti draft resolution does, it only makes a peaceful resolution of this conflict harder to reach. We strongly encourage the Security Council to vote against Kuwait's draft resolution and to acknowledge the concerns about Hamas by voting in favour of the United States draft resolution. Everyone at this table has a choice — either to support Hamas or not. This vote will tell the story.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall first put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/516, submitted by Kuwait.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Peru, Russian Federation, Sweden

Against:
United States of America

Abstaining:
Ethiopia, Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolution received 10 votes in favour, one against and four abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The draft resolution (S/2018/516), which was not adopted by the Security Council owing to the veto by the United States, was submitted by us on behalf of the Group of Arab States, as Kuwait is the Arab member of the Council at present. This draft resolution was also supported by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation at its extraordinary emergency summit, held recently in Istanbul. We deplore that the Council failed to adopt the draft resolution, which stipulated that international protection should be provided to the Palestinian people. The past few days have shown that the Palestinian people, as a result of the tragic situation in which they live, are in dire need of swaying our conscience to provide them with the protection they require in the face of the massacres perpetrated against them by Israel, the occupying Power.

Not only in the light of the most recent protests, but also over the past five decades, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and relevant Security Council resolutions have not been taken into consideration. We would like to thank all countries that voted in favour of the draft resolution for their principled and supportive positions towards the Charter of the United Nations and the international law.

The message sent by the Security Council today in voting against the draft resolution is that the occupying Power is not subject to international law and Security Council resolutions, that it is exempt from accountability and condemnation, and that the Palestinian people, even after repeated Israeli aggressions and violations against their basic rights, do not even deserve a mechanism to provide them with international protection, despite the Council's affirmation and commitment that it protects civilians, in line with many of its resolutions. The message is also that the most recent events, which claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians and thousands of injured people, including women and children, do not deserve an independent and transparent investigation in order to identify the perpetrator, even though we all know who the aggressor is and who is responsible for that.

The Council's failure to assume its responsibilities and to compel the occupying Power to implement Security Council resolutions will exacerbate the situation in the occupying territories and increase the feeling of frustration and despair among Palestinians, which will undoubtedly fuel further violence, instability, hatred and extremism.

I would like in this regard to quote the questions posed to the entire world by the Amir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in his address to the seventh extraordinary Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation which was held in Istanbul on 18 May. He asked,

> "Why must the Palestinians continue to suffer? Why do we ignore Security Council resolutions and fail to implement them? Why does the international community fail to act and resolve the situation? Why does Israel enjoy impunity? Why are all those lives lost? Why is all that blood shed while the entire world remains silent?"

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, and I join colleagues in welcoming you to the presidency for this month and saying that the United Kingdom looks forward to working with Russia. I also thank Poland for its very distinguished presidency of the Council.

The United Kingdom remains extremely concerned by the situation in Gaza. We condemn the violent activities of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other terrorist organisations, and we condemn them unreservedly. We have recently witnessed unacceptable mortar and rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel. Such acts of terror are destructive to peace efforts, and they need to stop. In the past weeks, we have seen violence, Hamas' exploitation of peaceful protests and a disturbing volume of live fire. Hamas' military wing has been proscribed as a terrorist organization by the United Kingdom since 2001, and the United Kingdom has sanctions in place against senior Hamas officials.

The recent violence has led to the tragic loss of life of over 100 Palestinians, and we reiterate that there is an urgent need to establish the facts surrounding past weeks' events. The deteriorating situation in Gaza should concentrate our minds on how we can work urgently towards a resolution of the long-standing issues between Israel and the Palestinian people.

The United Kingdom has long supported United Nations action on Israeli-Palestinian issues. It is therefore regrettable that today's draft resolutions S/2018/516 and S/2018/520 contain elements that are either imbalanced or too vague to be viable. For example, the Kuwaiti text fails to name terrorist actors, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and its suggestion of an international protection mechanism risks raising unrealistic expectations. We condemn Hamas, but at the same time we regret that the American text does not adequately reference Israel's responsibilities and obligations with regard to Gaza. Therefore, the United Kingdom will abstain in the voting on both draft resolutions today.

I have set out our principled rationale and nothing more should be construed.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Poland on its excellent Security Council presidency in May. I also congratulate Russia on assuming the presidency and wish it every success.

We regret that the Security Council has not been able to achieve consensus on a text. On behalf of realism and pragmatism, and independent of the differences that may exist between us on the content, who could argue that the gravity of the situation in Gaza and the threats to regional stability that result from it do not demand a strong message from the Council?

We are touching on the heart of the Council's responsibility — both its role as recognized by the Charter of the United Nations with regard to peace and security and its historic role in the conflict between Israel and Palestine. It is the Council that, over a number of decades, has defined the main parameters for resolving that conflict, and those same parameters have been rendered fragile by unilateral initiatives. If the Council fails to fulfil its responsibilities today, who will assume them?

After two months in which 120 people have been killed and 4,000 have been left with bullet wounds, and in which the risk of an escalation of the situation in Gaza has never been higher since 2014, as we have seen by the dozens of rockets launched from Gaza into Israeli territory during recent days, the Council is silent. The Council's heavy silence is increasingly deafening. This silence is neither acceptable nor understandable. It is not acceptable to the Palestinian and Israeli people, who are the first victims of the conflict. It is not understandable to the world, which looks to us and harshly judges our inaction in the face of a new conflict in the Middle East. Lastly, it is disastrous for the very credibility of the Council and, more broadly, of multilateralism, which we believe in more than ever.

We have been ready to commit to a constructive discussion on all draft texts presented to Council members over the past few months without exception. There may be difficulties with certain texts, but we believe precisely in the possibility of overcoming those difficulties through discussion. We believe in the possibility of patiently and pragmatically reaching consensus. After all, that is the very heart of our responsibility under the terms of the Charter of the United Nations.

A new opportunity was given to us to overcome this silence by engaging in a discussion on the draft resolution as presented by Kuwait (S/2018/516). The text that was initially presented did present some difficulties. Alongside other members of the Council, we are committed to a rigorous discussion in order to distinctly improve the text and that was the condition that we set in order to provide our support to the text.

The final text is certainly not perfect. We would have liked it to clearly establish Hamas' responsibility and condemn the rocket launches against Israel, for example, but the in-depth consultations carried out over the past two weeks have led to significant improvements. The text that we support today responds to a situation in which, over the past few weeks and in particular on 14 May, when 60 people lost their lives, we have seen a disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force. The text deplores that situation and calls for the right to respect for peaceful protest. It also calls for protection measures to be taken in the Palestinian territories and in particular in Gaza. It requests that the Secretary-General report on the subject within two months.

But the text does not stop there. It responds, at least in part, to the concerns we have voiced. For example,

the text condemns all acts of violence — including terrorist acts — against civilians. It calls on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and human rights. It also condemns any action that could endanger the lives of civilians and calls upon all actors to ensure that protests remain peaceful. It is no longer silent on rocket attacks targeting civilians on Israeli territory. It also recalls that the lifting of the blockade on Gaza, which must take place, should take into account the security concerns of all. As the Council knows, France will never compromise on Israel's security. Finally, the text encourages initiatives that seek long-term improvements to the humanitarian situation in Gaza, pursuant to the proposals of the Special Coordinator of the United Nations, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, as well as tangible progress in inter-Palestinian reconciliation.

The text ends with a call for relaunching the peace process in order to reach an agreement between the parties within the framework of the two-State solution. All of these elements, like our readiness to allow the Security Council to assume its responsibilities have led us to vote in favour of the draft resolution. The meaning of our work, the very purpose of the Council is to work towards a common understanding and response to threats to peace and security. We once again call on all parties to embark upon this path in good faith and with perseverance. The credibility of the Council and our collective action depend on it.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): The delegation of Kazakhstan congratulates the Russian Federation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We wish our colleagues every success in chairing the work of the Council in the month of June. We also commend Ms. Wronecka, her team and Poland, as a whole, for their excellent and professional stewardship of the Council's activities last month.

Kazakhstan voted in favour of the Kuwaiti draft resolution S/2018/516 today because we believe that any type of violence against civilians — including acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction — must be stopped. Lives were lost and we cannot remain silent.

In addressing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the draft resolution calls on the good offices of the Secretary-General and the use of peacemaking mechanisms of the United Nations in this context. At the same time, the document calls on all parties to refrain from any actions that might aggravate tensions further or lead to a spiralling of conflict from which we could not recover. As a supporter of the draft resolution, we would also like to reiterate our principled position in favour of resolving disputes through peaceful dialogue, confidence-building measures and constructive negotiations between States on the basis of equal responsibility for peace and security.

Astana calls on the world community and conflicting parties to make renewed and urgent efforts to create conditions necessary to relaunch credible negotiations and to achieve, without delay, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and harmony with Israel within secure and recognized borders. That goal should be reached on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, as called for in resolution 2334 (2016) and other relevant resolutions.

I conclude by calling on all sides to find common ground as peace and security are the only possible solution to this difficult issue.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I believe that, under your leadership, the work of the Council will make new progress. I would like to thank Poland for its important contribution to the Council in its capacity as President of the Council last month.

At present, the world's attention is focused on the tense situation in Palestine. China expresses its serious concern over the violent conflict in the border area of Gaza, which has caused heavy casualties. We oppose any acts of violence against civilians and call on Israel and Palestine, particularly Israel, to exercise restraint and to help defuse tensions in order to avoid casualties.

The issue of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East question. Seven decades have passed but the legitimate rights and interests of the Palestinian people are still subject to unfair treatment. Such historical injustices must be redressed. The Council and the international community should uphold justice by taking swift action to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the people of Palestine and the Arab people, intensifying efforts to promote peace and negotiation and facilitating the early resumption of talks between the two sides in order to achieve the two-State solution that will bring about peaceful coexistence between the two countries.

The draft resolution submitted by Kuwait objectively reflects the current situation. It helps protect Palestinian civilians from harm and de-escalates tensions between the two sides. China appreciates Kuwait's efforts to seek the widest possible consensus in an open and constructive manner. China voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Kuwait.

I would like to reiterate here that China welcomes and supports all efforts to help ease the situation between the two sides and facilitate the early achievement of the two-State solution and peaceful coexistence between the two countries. China will continue to follow the four-point proposal by Chinese President Xi Jinping for the political settlement of the Palestinian issue, and we will work with the international community and play an active and constructive role in promoting peace in the Middle East.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency this month. I wish you good luck and all the success in your endeavours. I also thank you for your kind words.

Allow me now to refer to the topic of today's discussion. Let me express our appreciation for Kuwait's transparency in conducting the negotiations on this draft resolution. We would like to thank the Kuwaiti Ambassador and our colleagues from the Kuwaiti delegation for their tremendous efforts to accommodate all comments made by the members of the Security Council. While recognizing those efforts, we were unfortunately not in a position to support the text, as we would have preferred a more balanced result.

We stress that it is the responsibility of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other militant groups in Gaza to ensure that no protests are used to inspire violence. All acts of violence against civilians, including terrorist rocket attacks, acts of terror and all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction, are unacceptable and must stop.

At the same time, while we recognize Israel's right to protect its border and defend its civilian population, we call on Israel to respect the rights of Palestinian civilians to peaceful protests and to the principle of proportionality in the use of force when defending its legitimate security interests. We call for respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, particularly with regard to the prohibition of the deliberate targeting of civilians and other protected persons in situations of armed conflict. All actors must comply strictly with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. We call for an end to all actions that make a resumption of negotiations more difficult and reiterate our call for a comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians based on a political settlement and bilateral dialogue leading to a two-State solution.

Finally, let me reiterate what I have already said in the Chamber: there is no justification under any circumstances for deliberate acts of violence against the civilian population, and both Israelis and Palestinians have the right to live in peace and safety.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Mr. President, allow me to wish you and your delegation every success during the Russian presidency of the Security Council in June. I should also like to express my gratitude and appreciation for the excellent work of Poland during its presidency of the Council in May.

We regret the fact that the draft resolution submitted today by the delegation of Kuwait (S/2018/516) was not adopted owing to a negative vote by one of the permanent members of the Security Council. The draft had been subject to extensive negotiations by the members of the Council and was the outcome of broad-based discussions in which, I reiterate, we all participated, and a balanced text had been achieved in which primacy was accorded to safeguarding the lives of civilians, whether Palestinian or Israeli. The fact that the draft was blocked makes it clear that despite the existence of agreement on the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, that agreement is insufficient in the face of a veto by a permanent member.

Bolivia, on the basis of its policy of pacifism, reaffirms its strong condemnation of any kind of attack on civilians or on civilian health or education infrastructure in any form, as these are unjustifiable whatever the reason and wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed, given that they are breaches of the most basic tenets of international law. However, we feel compelled to recall the underlying structural cause of the dreadful situation of the Palestinian people, which is the illegal Israeli occupation. The main threat to both Palestinian and Israeli civilians is Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory. We deplore the fact that once again the Security Council has also become a kind of occupied territory, as a result of the negative vote and veto of one of its permanent members.

The situation is much more critical for the Palestinian civilian population, whose right to protection was denied today. For 70 years they have been living under the yoke of the occupying Power, Israel, and the Israel Defense Forces. Who sets up and runs the checkpoints on Palestinian territory? Israel. Who built an annexationist wall? Israel. Who is responsible for the construction of illegal settlements in Palestinian territory? Israel. Who is responsible for preventing the return of more than 6 million Palestinian refugees to their homes? Israel. Who is responsible for the detention of hundreds of children? Israel. Who is responsible for Gaza being besieged and blockaded by air and sea and lacking the basic services of water and electricity? Israel. And, ultimately, who is responsible for the illegal occupation of territories that do not belong to it? Israel.

Bolivia firmly believes that the only long-term solution to the occupation situation facing the Palestinian people is a two-State solution, leading at long last to a free, sovereign and independent Palestinian State, within the internationally recognized pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Kuwait (S/2018/516), on the protection of civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories, because its provisions corresponded to the Russian Federation's principled approach to a settlement in the Middle East. The international community must of course deal with the important questions reflected in the draft resolution, including the humanitarian situation in Gaza, the re-establishment of Palestinian unity and the return of control over the sector to the Palestinian authorities. We must not slack off our efforts in support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, whose work significantly eases the burden on Palestinian refugees. But all of these steps should be subordinate to a resolution of the main strategic objective of achieving a Palestinian-Israel settlement based on the international legal foundation that we are all familiar with. That settlement presupposes the implementation of a two-State solution based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the decisions of the Middle East Quartet.

We reiterate that imposing a solution through force and a rejection of direct dialogue is not a viable choice. Such an approach would only exacerbate mistrust and make the prospects for relaunching the negotiation process ever more distant. We firmly condemn the indiscriminate attacks on civilians that have resulted in significant numbers of victims, as well as the firing of rockets into residential areas of Israel.

For our part, as a permanent member of the Security Council and a member of the Quartet, we will continue to encourage both sides to resume direct negotiations as soon as possible, since it is their absence that is the reason for the current problematic situation regarding a Palestinian-Israeli settlement. Russia has repeatedly proposed its services as a mediator and offered to host a summit between the leaders of Palestine and Israel in order to relaunch a direct dialogue, and our proposal still stands. We are ready to work sincerely and energetically with every partner interested in achieving a speedy end to the current impasse on a Middle East settlement.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/520, submitted by the United States of America. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:
United States of America

Against:
Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Kuwait, Russian Federation

Abstaining:
China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolution received 1 vote in favour, 3 against and 11 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): We regret having had to abstain in the voting on draft resolution S/2018/520, submitted by the United States. That decision was reached after considering the method by which the draft was immediately put to the vote without prior negotiations. It was also reached after considering its substance. The text does not reflect a balanced and impartial view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the framework of internationally agreed parameters of international law and of Council resolutions. The text reflects but one of the many causes of the crisis in the Gaza and does not provide a response or solution to the tragedy afflicting Palestinian and Israeli civilian populations.

That said, we share the concerns expressed in the text, given the activities of Hamas and other armed groups on the Gaza strip. We firmly condemned the firing of rockets into Israeli territory on 29 May and hope that the Security Council also condemns such activity. More generally, France was ready to support several paragraphs of the draft submitted by the United States, starting with those that condemn the firing of rockets from Gaza, which call on Hamas to refrain from committing violent acts, in particular those targeting civilians, and demand that it cease all activities that harm civilian populations close to the separation barrier between Israel and Gaza. I can also list other examples. As we have already underscored with regard to other draft texts, we believe that the Council's responsibility is to provide a general response to the crisis in Gaza, which is not reflected in the text we have before us.

Despite the discord I just mentioned with regard to the overall imbalance of the amendments presented, once again we stood ready to engage in constructive discussions with a view to sharing our opinions and, if possible, drafting one text on which we could vote. But, as I explained earlier, because of the method by which the text was put to the vote and its substance, we had no other option but to abstain in the voting.

All in all, today's meeting is another missed opportunity for the Council. It is regrettable, of course, but the Council can count on France, as a friend of Israelis and Palestinians, to never give up.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to congratulate the delegation of the Russian Federation on having assumed the presidency of the Security Council and wish it every success in its work.

Secondly, I would like to thank the Ambassador of Poland for the excellent manner in which she steered the work of the Council in May.

We deplore the fact that, despite the efforts of the facilitator and other members of the Council, we were unable to reach a substantive agreement. We would like to underscore that Peru agrees with some of the proposals the United States included in its draft resolution (S/2018/520). We believe in particular that all terrorist acts committed against the Israeli civilian population and perpetrated by organizations such as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, in particular the recent firing of rockets, must be firmly condemned.

We would have liked to have been able to consider and discuss such proposals during our consultations so that they could be reflected in a text to which everyone was wholly committed. To that end, we also believed that it was important to reaffirm our continued recognition of Israel's right to guarantee its security and legitimate defence. Nonetheless, we abstained in the voting on the draft resolution submitted the United States because serious developments on the ground must be assessed holistically and impartially.

Peru has made a constructive and positive contribution to the negotiations facilitated by the delegation of Kuwait, as it attempted to reach a consensus-based and balanced final document that reflected the legitimate concerns of Council members, with regard to the current deteriorating situation. In that regard, in addition to highlighting the role of its delegation, we would like to thank Kuwait for its draft text (S/2018/516) because it reflects many of the concerns conveyed by our delegation during negotiations, which is why we voted in favour of it.

Our action on that and other items on the Security Council agenda is primarily geared towards building consensus that would enable the protection of civilians, in line with international humanitarian law, and addressing the root causes of conflicts, in particular in the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which has serious implications for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Lastly, we believe that it is urgent that the parties resume negotiations towards a two-State solution with safe and internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I congratulate Russia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We

deeply admire and thank Poland for the manner in which it conducted business as president of the Council in May.

It is highly regrettable that the Council was unable to find unity around a meaningful decision in response to the situation in and around Gaza over the past few months. Sweden voted in favour of the draft resolution presented by Kuwait (S/2018/516) for a number of reasons.

First, it calls for full respect by all parties of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including with regard to the protection of the civilian population. The draft resolution requests that the Security-General recommend a mechanism for that purpose.

Secondly, the text condemns all acts of violence, including acts of terrorism. It deplores both excessive disproportionate and indiscriminate force by Israeli forces against civilians in Palestine and the firing of rockets from Gaza into civilian areas in Israel.

Thirdly, it calls for immediate steps to end the closure of Gaza. While fully understanding the legitimate security concerns of Israel, Palestine and Egypt, we have repeatedly called for the lifting of restrictions and full and sustained access for all donors.

Fourthly, the text welcomes and urges further engagement by the Secretary-General and the Special Coordinator to assist in immediate efforts to de-escalate the situation on the ground. We urge all parties to act with utmost restraint to avoid the loss of life, break the cycle of violence and prevent a new conflict.

I would like to pay tribute to the Kuwaiti delegation for facilitating the draft resolution. We all know that the matter is sensitive, but our Kuwaiti colleagues have displayed good faith, inclusiveness, flexibility and transparency during the negotiations process.

With regard to the draft resolution proposed by the United States, we believe that the language does not address the full reality or context of the situation in Gaza, including the violence and tragic loss of life we have witnessed since last March. In addition, the proposal does not contain important language on international humanitarian law and humanitarian access, which are of fundamental importance to the people on the ground. The draft resolution does not address the end result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for which the Council has been striving for many years — a negotiated two-State solution based on international law, previous agreements, relevant United Nations resolutions and known parameters. Furthermore, the draft resolution was not presented for negotiations or consultations among the members of the Council, in accordance with established procedure. For those reasons, while sympathetic to many aspects of the draft, we abstained in the voting on the text.

While the Council could not agree today, we must not abdicate our responsibility under the Charter. On Wednesday, the Special Coordinator clearly warned us of how close to the brink of war we currently are and of the pressing humanitarian situation in Gaza (see S/PV.8272). The Council must come together to address the crisis and the tension. Otherwise, we risk sliding into another devastating conflict like we did four years ago. This is indeed about conflict prevention.

The Special Coordinator presented a plan last week that included the urgent implementation of already approved projects for Gaza, which would have immediate benefits for the daily lives of people, revive efforts to empower the Palestinian Authority to take up its responsibilities in Gaza, and sustain the 2014 ceasefire understandings on the ground, including halting the militant build-up.

Sweden stands ready to contribute to efforts in the Security Council to take such measures forward with renewed urgency and determination.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): We would like to commend Ambassador Joanna Wronecka and her team for an excellent presidency of the Security Council in the month of May.

My statement relates to both draft resolutions. First of all, we thank Kuwait for taking the initiative to present a draft resolution that addresses the recent crisis in Gaza (S/2018/516). We are thankful for the transparent process and extensive efforts undertaken by the delegation to accommodate the concerns of Council members. We highly appreciate the continuous engagement by Kuwait with Council members in drawing up its draft resolution.

As we have said before, the Security Council should be able to unite and formulate a joint response to the developments of the past weeks. We regret that we have failed to do so today. We witnessed the repeated protests in Gaza and the heavy-handed Israeli response that led to the death of 110 Palestinians and many more

injured. This was the highest number of casualties recorded since the end of the 2014 hostilities. The firing of rockets and mortars by Palestinian militant groups on 29 May and the following counterattacks were the most serious escalation since 2014. As we also discussed in the Security Council yesterday, this again shows that the risk of escalation and the violence spiralling out of control is very high.

Protection of civilians is crucial, as both Palestinian and Israeli civilians should not have to live in fear. Regrettably, the Kuwaiti draft resolution that was put to a vote today did not fully reflect our concerns with regard to addressing the needs of all civilians nor the negative role of Palestinian militant groups in Gaza specifically, nor remaining questions on the international protection mechanism. We welcome the fact that the draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2018/520) condemns the role of Hamas, but it does not cover the broader context or Israel's responsibilities and obligations. That is why we abstained in the voting on both draft resolutions.

We repeat our call on all parties to exercise restraint in order to avoid escalation and prevent incidents that put the lives of both Palestinian and Israeli civilians at risk. We confirm our firm support for the work and proposals of Mr. Mladenov. It is of the utmost importance that the efforts to address the crisis in Gaza continue, in order to bring humanitarian relief to those in need and to prevent further escalation. We call on all parties to engage constructively.

In conclusion, we confirm our strong commitment to the peace process — a process that must result in the two-State solution, which is the only way to bring about a sustainable solution to the crisis in Gaza. It is the only way to fulfil the aspirations of both sides and to put an end to the conflict. It is the only way to achieve the just and lasting peace that Israelis and Palestinians long for and deserve.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakstan): Kazakhstan regrets that we cannot achieve unity in the Security Council on the two draft resolutions that were submitted today (S/2018/516 and S/2018/520). My delegation notes the importance of continuing to strive towards achieving a well-balanced draft and welcomes all efforts to that end. We appreciate the efforts of the Kuwaiti and United States delegations in trying to reach the desired result in the draft resolutions upon which we have just voted.

My delegation abstained in the voting on the United States draft resolution because we still would have liked to see a more balanced and all-embracing draft as well as a more thorough preparatory process for consideration and elaboration of a proposed text. Unfortunately, that was not the case today. Moreover, we would prefer a draft that contributes to finding common ground and bring parties to work together towards a peaceful future. As we always say in the Council, the only possible way is through direct dialogue, political and diplomatic means and confidence-building measures. To our regret, references to peaceful means and credible and direct negotiations were omitted in the United States draft resolution.

Upon consideration and careful review, we believe that the best course of action is one that avoids greater divisiveness between the two sides and thereby further impedes the peace process.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): In my statement today, I would like to address both failed draft resolutions (S/2018/516 and S/2018/520), as each has failed in a different ways. I would like to thank and express our appreciation to Ambassador Joanna Wronecka and her colleagues in the Polish mission for the excellent leadership they provided to the Security Council until yesterday. We look forward to a very successful Russian presidency this month. Of course, we count on your wisdom, Mr. President.

Ethiopia is a friend to both the Israelis and the Palestinians, and the ties we have with both peoples have deep sociological and historical roots. Our position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has always been consistent and principled.

With regard to the recent developments surrounding the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory and the events that took place in Gaza, we have had the opportunity to express our position on the matter a number of times recently. We have called on Israel to show maximum restraint and expressed our deepest sorry and sympathy for the loss of lives. As we said last time (see S/PV.8272), we believe that Israel's right to self-defence is a right that carries with it the responsibility to ensure proportionality.

On the other hand, we are also deeply concerned by the indiscriminate firing of rockets by Palestinian militants from Gaza towards southern Israel and underscored that Hamas and the leaders of the demonstrations have the responsibility to prevent all

violent actions and provocations. We know — and everyone knows — that these rockets did not cause much damage, either in terms of lives lost or property destroyed, but they compromise the clarity of the Palestinians' legitimate protest for justice, which we support wholeheartedly. We are second to none in this regard.

These latest developments undoubtedly undermine the serious efforts by the international community to improve the situation in Gaza. We have engaged constructively in the negotiation process on the Kuwaiti draft that was vetoed earlier, and we have presented input that we thought was important to balance the text. We thank and appreciate all of Kuwait's efforts to address most, if not all, of our concerns. That said, we still feel it would have been appropriate to explicitly condemn recent actions by Hamas, particularly in the light of the most recent developments. Unlike Sweden, we felt that more should have been done to balance the draft resolution in that regard. This is what has led to the situation we find ourselves in today, having to vote on two competing draft resolutions. Our proposal would have helped to avoid this situation. The draft resolution submitted by the United States was circulated yesterday, and was put in blue without giving us the opportunity to provide the necessary input with a view to maintaining the right balance. While it certainly addresses the concerns we had with regard to Hamas, it shifts the whole narrative in another direction that we do not believe is proper, fair or helpful. As we said the day before yesterday (see S/PV.8272), it is crucial to get the narrative right. If we miss that, we miss everything. What matters is the narrative.

In that regard, it is absolutely critical to stress that the Palestinians' quest to assert their rights and ensure their self-determination by establishing an independent State must not be overshadowed by a narrative that seeks to focus on terrorism. We trust that the Council is aware of that and will not lose sight of that very critical point, which is more important than supporting a draft resolution that ends up being vetoed. That partly explains why we abstained in the voting on both draft resolutions.

We believe that it would have been better to narrow the differences and enable the Council to send the right message by adopting a consensus resolution in response to the most recent developments in Gaza. There is no denying the fact that those developments have once again brought the Israeli-Palestinian dispute back to the fore, underscoring the urgency of reinvigorating the peace process without further delay. It remains absolutely imperative to work towards de-escalating this dangerous situation in order to protect civilians, break the cycle of violence and resume the much-needed peace process so as to save the two-State formula, which is a long-held position of the United Nations and the international community.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Kuwait voted against draft resolution S/2018/520. At the outset, I would like to underscore that our vote does not mean that we do not condemn all acts of violence targeting civilians. We have stressed that in our previous statements in meetings on the situation in the occupied territories, including the Palestinian question. We condemn all acts of violence targeting civilians committed by anyone, anywhere and at any time.

However, the draft resolution submitted by the United States that we have voted against is simply biased in favour of the Israeli occupying Power. It justifies its illegal and illegitimate practices and policies in the occupied territories. It turns a blind eye to the recent tragic events and massacres perpetrated by the occupation forces against dozens of civilians and peaceful protesters. It encourages the occupying Power to continue its illegitimate practices and violations of the relevant international law and Security Council resolutions. It includes no reference to protecting Palestinian civilians, lifting the blockade on Gaza or even reducing the restrictions on the movement of goods and people. Moreover, the right to self-defence should not apply to the aggressor and occupier. The draft resolution should therefore call for an end to the occupation. For those reasons, we voted against the draft resolution.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation voted against draft resolution S/2018/520, submitted by the United States, on the situation in the Palestinian occupied territories, although we would be ready to agree with some of its provisions. We certainly recognize Israel's right to security. Our vote is connected to the fact the document represents the latest attempt by the United States to revise the international legal basis for a settlement in the Middle East. Not only that, it also included elements that do not correspond to Russia's position. The United

States has repeatedly urged the members of the Security Council to maintain a balanced view when considering crisis situations in the Middle East. However, it upset that balance in its own draft resolution.

We are concerned about the fact that the draft resolution of the United States did not include any calls for creating conditions conducive to resuming talks on final status issues, with the aim of finding a path to a lasting settlement on the basis of a two-State solution for both Israel and Palestine, which would exist in security within internationally recognized borders. Even references to the Arab Peace Initiative and the Middle East Quartet, which remains the unique mediation mechanism approved by the Security Council, were removed.

We encourage the commencement of practical work aimed at launching direct Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): We congratulate the Russian Federation on its presidency of the Security Council and would like to sincerely thank you, Mr. President, for your ready response to the request to convene today's meeting. We would also like to recognize Poland for its skilled leadership of the Security Council last month, including the meetings held to address the Palestinian question and the important debates on international law and the protection of civilians, which are so relevant to the grave crisis we are facing right now. We will never forget the Permanent Representative of Poland's humane gesture when she asked Security Council members to stand for a minute of silence in honour of the Palestinian innocents killed by Israeli forces (see S/PV.8256). We appreciate that and will never forget it.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to our brother country of Kuwait for submitting draft resolution S/2018/516, which the Security Council just voted on, and for the Kuwaiti delegation's tireless efforts to ensure the Council's serious consideration of our repeated calls for international protection for the Palestinian people. We commend the Kuwaiti delegation for the comprehensive and transparent process it and other Council members undertook to advance the issue. We regret, however, the extremely evil intent aimed at undermining that process and the Council's credibility and authority.

We are grateful to all the countries that voted in favour of the draft resolution, despite the veto cast today by the United States, which regrettably prevented its adoption, and despite the ensuing tensions and confusion. We would like to convey our deep appreciation to Kuwait, Bolivia, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Kazakhstan, Peru, Sweden and the Russian Federation for standing firmly on principle, responding to the urgency of the situation and standing unequivocally on the side of international law with regard to Palestine, including on the protection of civilians. Indeed, today's vote sends important messages that must be recognized, including the following.

First, there is a severe protection crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem and particularly in the Gaza Strip, due to Israel's illegal policies and practices, such as its use of force against Palestinian civilians conducting peaceful protests and its blockade of Gaza, among other oppressive and punitive measures against our people.

Secondly, Israel's killing and injuring of Palestinian civilians will not be tolerated and cannot be excused. The occupying Power must fully abide by its obligations under international law.

Thirdly, the Palestinian people are entitled to protection in accordance with international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and the Security Council's obligations and commitments to protecting civilians in armed conflict.

Fourthly, immediate steps must be taken to end Israel's closure and restrictions on Gaza, and ensure the sustained opening of the crossing points for the normal movement and access of persons and goods. This entirely illegal, inhumane and suffocating Israeli blockade must end.

Fifthly, maximum restraint is required on the part of all parties, as are immediate steps to stabilize the situation and reverse the negative trends on the ground.

Sixthly, it is time to seriously consider measures to guarantee the safety, protection and well-being of the Palestinian people, including through the establishment of an international protection mechanism. The Palestinian leadership, including President Mahmoud

Abbas, has long called for such measures, and we are grateful that despite all of the pressures, this issue has been given due consideration by the Security Council and enjoys the majority support of the Council's members. Their votes today refute the premise that the Palestinian people are the exception to the rules and principles of international law, reaffirming instead that they are entitled to the rights and legal protections to which all peoples are entitled — reinforcing the universality of the law and its application to this conflict. They have rejected the might-over-right strategy, sending a clear message that no one is exempt from the law — not even Israel, regardless of the exceptionalism it has for too long enjoyed.

Of course, the final outcome of today's vote is extremely disappointing but, unfortunately, not surprising. While we had sincerely hoped and exerted all efforts to ensure that the Security Council would uphold its duties pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations and act responsibly to address the protection crisis being endured by the Palestinian people, we have never underestimated the obstacles in that regard. We deeply regret the Council's continued paralysis on our issue due to the recurrent negative and biased position of one permanent member of the Security Council. We deplore the use of the veto to continue shielding Israel from censure and accountability for its crimes against our people and to wrongly prevent the Council from upholding its Charter duties in the maintenance of international peace and security, including by actions aimed at saving civilian lives.

Moreover, we strongly reject the cynical attempts to delay, undermine and thwart action on this initiative in a manner that denigrates the Council's work and the serious efforts to address these critical matters in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions. We also firmly reject the renewed attempt today to classify our situation as one of terrorism. It is not. We reject that classification. It is about the denial of an entire people's human rights and their oppression and dehumanization every single day and for decades. This is a political, territorial rights and justice issue and we cannot accept the lecturing accusations that the draft presented by Kuwait was in any way biased.

The draft, which was negotiated for more than two weeks realistically, addresses all of the factors of the current crisis, including violence on both sides. If anything, the draft does not go far enough in addressing the nightmare the Palestinian people are living under this criminal Israeli occupation. What we are facing can be described in just a few words declared this week by the Israeli Minister Yuval Steinitz, who said: "I do not exclude the possibility of conquering Gaza and eliminating it once and for all". This is the reality of the constant aggression, threats and existential crisis the Palestinian people are enduring under Israeli occupation, which the current United States Administration refuses to see, refuses to understand, or, in any way properly address.

We will continue our calls and efforts to secure protection for the Palestinian people to ensure their safety and well-being. We will continue to seek accountability and to pursue justice for the victims through all available legal means, including through the International Criminal Court. We await the dispatch of the commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council and the findings following a thorough, independent and transparent investigation, as requested by the Secretary-General himself. We will not relent in pressing for answers, including why Palestinian children, women and men were killed and injured so wantonly and wilfully by the Israeli occupying forces under the direct command of Israel's highest political and military leaders and who is to be held responsible.

In spite of today's outcome and the paralysis gripping the Security Council, we will not stop calling for Council action and the implementation of all of its relevant resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), because it is its duty and obligation to act and to address such gross violations and threats to international peace and security and to ultimately contribute to bringing an end to this injustice and ensuring a just, lasting and peaceful solution to this conflict.

Allow me now to end my statement with a message to our people in Arabic.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

We will continue, on behalf of our steadfast people in the occupied Palestinian territory and the great people of Palestine, to make every effort to raise their voice — the voice of reason and justice — and to end their painful plight. We will spare no effort in calling for respect for our inalienable rights and to achieve our legitimate national aspirations. The result of the voting today will only make us more committed and persistent in working in the Security Council with the sisterly State of Kuwait and all friendly countries, and with the support of our brothers and sisters in the Group of Arab

States; the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; all of our friends and free, peace-loving States in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America; the General Assembly and every other international forum to end the Israeli occupation of our territory in order to achieve the freedom, dignity and independence of our people. There is no force in this world, however great, that is greater than the determination of our Palestinian people, which has lasted for more than seven decades. There can be nothing more deep-rooted than our history and civilization, which is all about steadfastness and challenge. We will continue to resolutely defend our just cause so that we can live in peace and security in our own independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

To all those who accuse the tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians peacefully protesting against the occupation of being terrorists — and those accusers got nothing but their own vote in the Security Council on their failed draft resolution — we say that the entire Palestinian people, in their millions, are against occupation and the terrorism practiced by the State of Israel, whose latest victim, on this very day, was Razan Ashraf Al-Najjar, a martyr at 21 years of age. She was a paramedic carrying out her humanitarian duties when she was shot in the back by the Israeli enemy. The bullet pierced her heart and ended her life.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Danon (Israel): Before I begin, I would like to congratulate the Russian Federation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to thank the Polish Ambassador for her presidency.

On 15 May the Security Council began its meeting with a moment of silence for the 61 Palestinians killed in Gaza the day before (see S/PV.8256). As members stood and paid their respects in mourning, Hamas revealed that nearly 90 per cent of those who had died had been identified as Hamas terrorists. Hamas bragged about it. In an interview, Dr. Salah Bardawil, a Hamas leader, confirmed it. He said, "I am giving you an official figure. Fifty of the martyrs in the recent battle were from Hamas".

On that day, Security Council members stood in solidarity with the terrorists of Hamas. One would think that the absurdity would end there, but it did not. Moments later, at the same meeting, the Ambassador of Bolivia listed some of the names of the people who had died in Gaza, even as Hamas took pride in the fact that the vast majority of them were its own. In the eyes of the Ambassador of Bolivia, Anas Hamdan Salim Qadee, a 21-year-old confirmed member of Hamas's military wing, did not count as a terrorist. He must have forgotten that this wing is the same one that is listed as a terrorist organization by Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the European Union, Japan, the United Kingdom, Egypt and the United States.

On 18 May the Human Rights Council adopted resolution S-28/1 on the recent events in Gaza. The resolution did not even mention Hamas. Despite Hamas's deadly activities and attacks, its attempts to breach the security fence and infiltrate Israel, its incitement of the people of Gaza, its use of innocent Palestinian women and children as human shields, the Human Rights Council chose to turn a blind eye. Today, too, the Security Council attempted to adopt a similar draft resolution (S/2018/516). We acknowledge the United States and all who did not support the draft for their moral clarity. The Security Council also had the opportunity to adopt a draft resolution proposed by the United States (S/2018/520), which rightly named Hamas and the other terrorist groups as the root cause of the conflict. It recognized that peace and stability will never come to our region until the international community is brave enough to call out the terrorists by name. We thank the Americans for taking the right stand. Ambassador Haley made it clear today that the rules of the game are changing here in the Council and that this double standard against Israel will not stand.

Despite the rockets fired by Hamas and Islamic Jihad at our civilians, despite the missile that landed in the yard of a kindergarten, despite the endless mortar shells striking our southern communities, the draft resolution submitted by Kuwait tried to give Hamas a free pass. This was a text born in sin. It tried to continue an alarming trend of absolving Hamas of all responsibility for the violence and death it has caused. It mentioned Israel five times. I do not know who drafted it; many worked actively on it. Five times it mentioned Israel, yet its drafters could not bring themselves to mention Hamas even once. Do they not know how to spell it? This empowers Hamas by granting it the Security Council's stamp of approval. Hamas has ruled Gaza with malice and brutality for 12 years. It has paid its civilians to storm the fence with the explicit goal of increasing the death toll. It has deprived the people of Gaza of their basic human rights. It uses Israel to create

a scapegoat for its own failures. Hamas has launched more than 10,000 rockets into Israeli communities and constructed nearly 40 terror tunnels in order to kidnap and kill Israelis.

It is true that the residents of Gaza need protection; they need protection from Hamas, the same organization that the Council cannot name. I must ask Council members, who are educated people and should understand facts when they see them, if they have not read the news. Have they not heard of the missiles that Hamas fired at Israeli schools or the explosives they placed at the fence? I ask them — I ask the Ambassador of France and the Ambassador of Sweden, who promoted this draft resolution — why did they omit Hamas from the draft resolution? What was the problem with adding it to the text? They had hours of negotiations. I am waiting for an answer. The residents of southern Israel are waiting for an answer.

Did they forget that the European Union has designated Hamas as a terrorist organization since 2003? Does that mean nothing to them? Maybe they can show us what happened at the back door when they drafted the text. I can go over the paragraph in which they speak about rockets flying from Gaza into Israel. They could have added "from Hamas". Maybe they want to explain to us why, when Paris was attacked by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), the international community stood with Paris, but when Israel is attacked by Hamas, they blame us, the victim. There is no difference between the evil of Hamas and the barbarity of ISIS, Al-Qaida or Boko Haram. Those organizations are no different in their mission to terrorize innocent people. They are all the same. The only draft resolution that the Council should adopt is one that condemns Hamas and designates it a terrorist organization.

When the Palestinians are concerned, the international community never misses an opportunity to blame Israel, but when it is about Palestinians living in danger in other countries, the international community is silent. Looking back at history, in 1991 200,000 Palestinians were expelled from Kuwait after the Gulf War. Many were abused or killed during that expulsion. Kuwaiti officials, and even members of Kuwait's royal family, called for the cleansing of Palestinian neighbourhoods. Today, thousands of Palestinians living in Lebanon are treated like third-class citizens. In Syria, the Yarmouk refugee camp has faced a siege, starvation and Government shelling for the past seven years. What was the world's reaction to Kuwait's abuse of Palestinians in the 1990s? Silence. What about its reaction to Lebanon's years of maltreatment of Palestinians? Silence. And to the situation of the Palestinians in Yarmouk camp in Syria? Silence once again. It seems that there are some in the United Nations who speak for the Palestinians only when Israel is involved. If the world truly wanted to help Palestinians, it would adopt a resolution on their situation in Kuwait, Lebanon or Syria. If it truly wanted to help Palestinians, it would adopt a resolution condemning Hamas, here, today.

Let me make myself clear. Israel will always protect its civilians. We will not allow our citizens to die for the world's distorted sense of fairness. When it comes to the Palestinian civilians who are put in harm's way by the terrorists in Gaza, it is Israel that acts with greater care and respect for human life than almost any other country, especially those that claim to stand in solidarity with the Palestinians.

Thankfully, the biased and hypocritical draft resolution submitted today was not adopted. But the Security Council's moment of silence, the Human Rights Council's resolution S-28/1, adopted on 18 May, and the draft resolution that was introduced today only empower Hamas. They convey the notion that some in the international community actually support Hamas, and confirm to Hamas that its violence and terrorism will surely go unnoticed. They grant Hamas full immunity. The only way to protect the Palestinians in Gaza is by holding Hamas responsible. Those who supported today's draft resolution chose not to protect the Palestinians. Those who did not support it voted for the protection of Israelis and Palestinians.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Bolivia has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I did not intend to take the floor again, but the assertions by the representative of Israel leave me no alternative. What I cannot permit is his questioning of Bolivia's position with regard to terrorism. Bolivia will always condemn any act of terrorism, whatever the circumstances and wherever it may occur. But now that it is an issue — I am referring to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories — on the Security Council's agenda, it is also our duty, as members of the Council, elected by the membership of the General Assembly, to condemn

State terrorism, terrorism that is conducted through Israel's Government institutions and that is designed to benefit the Government of Israel, not the Israeli people, for whom we have the greatest respect and concern.

It seemed extremely strange that the representative of Israel should cite the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria as an example, considering that those refugees' right of return to their homes has gone unacknowledged for the past 70 years. Those 6 million refugees are living far from their own homes because of Israeli policy. That is not what Bolivia says; it is what international law says. How long will they continue to prevent those millions of refugees from returning home? The Ambassador of Palestine recalled that today a Palestinian paramedic was killed by a sniper. Is she also a member of Hamas? Are the five-, six- and seven-year-old children who have died in various attacks on Gaza also members of Hamas?

We commend the Human Rights Council's adoption on 18 May of resolution S-28/1, providing for the urgent establishment of an independent commission of inquiry so that the presumed violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law can be investigated. We hope that this will happen and that Israel will allow the commission to enter Israel and the occupied territories, with every assurance that it will be able to conduct an independent and impartial investigation, because, if I may say so, we do not trust the occupying Power's version, which attempts to cover up the essential underlying reason for the situation, which is Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories. That is what lies at the heart of the matter. When the occupation comes to an end, the refugees can return and the wall of annexation is dismantled, then, and only then, will the Security Council's resolutions be implemented.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Kuwait has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I will be brief. I would have preferred not to respond to the statement by the representative of Israel. Israel is a State Member of the United Nations, and when it became a member it pledged to respect the Charter of the United Nations. Article 25 of the Charter states that the Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. I must therefore ask why Israel does not abide by its commitments. Why does it not implement the Council's resolutions that it is committed to? Why does it not uphold international law and its pledges pursuant to the Geneva Conventions and other international conventions?

With regard to what the representative of Israel said about what he called the events of 1990, I would prefer not to comment because they have no basis in fact. They also have nothing to do with the subject under discussion today.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Israel has asked to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Danon (Israel): With regard to the statement by the representative of Bolivia, he speaks very passionately, but he should check the facts of the names he mentions in the Security Council. We fact-checked the names he mentioned and found that they were the names of members of Hamas. Every time he mentions a name in the Council, we will check to see if it is the name of a member of Hamas. But I would like to ask him today if he is willing to condemn Hamas for its acts of terror. He speaks very passionately about everything, but we want to hear that condemnation directed at Hamas. Is he able to do that? Is the Kuwaiti Ambassador even able to pronounce the word "Hamas"? We expect him to be brave enough to condemn Hamas here today.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. However, before closing the meeting, I should like to say a few words.

First, I would like to thank all of those who offered words of support for the Russian presidency of the Council for the month of June. We hope to have that support throughout the course of our presidency.

Secondly, I should like to recall that in our discussion, we neglected to mention that 1 June is the International Day for Protection of Children. Most of us have children, and I would like to congratulate everyone on this holiday. We are all big children to one degree or another, and it is therefore a holiday for all of us.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8275

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8275th meeting
Wednesday, 6 June 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Nebenzia	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Dah
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Radomski
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mrs. Dickson
	United States of America	Ms. French

Agenda

The situation in Libya

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18-17108 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council reaffirms its endorsement of and full support for the United Nations action plan for Libya, reiterates its call on all Libyans to work together in a spirit of compromise in the inclusive political process under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ghassan Salamé, and underscores the importance of the role of the United Nations in facilitating a Libyan-led political solution to the challenges facing Libya.

"The Security Council welcomes all efforts to strengthen an inclusive political dialogue among all Libyans, including important efforts by Libya's neighbours, international partners and regional organizations within the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement, endorsed by resolution 2259 (2015), and supports the Secretary-General's call to consolidate the various initiatives under the leadership of the United Nations. The Libyan Political Agreement remains the only viable framework to end the Libyan political crisis, and its implementation remains key to holding elections and finalizing the political transition.

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the humanitarian situation in Libya, especially in Derna, calls on all parties to exercise restraint, reiterates that all parties must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law regarding respecting and protecting civilians, and underlines the importance of safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to civilians.

"The Security Council bears in mind that the current political and security situation in Libya is not sustainable and recalls the resounding call of all Libyans for credible, inclusive and peaceful elections in order to achieve a united and stable Libya.

"The Security Council takes note of the call by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on 21 May for elections to be held in Libya as soon as possible, provided the proper conditions are in place. In this spirit, the Security Council welcomes the ongoing technical preparations by the Government of National Accord and Libyan institutions, including the High National Elections Commission, for national elections, including the successful first round of voter registration. The Security Council calls upon all Member States to urge all Libyans to work constructively to ensure that the required technical, legislative, political and security conditions are in place for national elections, including a new round of voter registration, appropriate funding and security arrangements and required electoral legislation, as well as to promote the meaningful and equal participation and representation of women in the political process, including in the election process.

"The Security Council calls on all Libyans to improve the atmosphere for national elections by all means possible, including by working constructively towards the unification of Libya's military and economic institutions; unified and strengthened national security forces, under civilian Government authority; and the unification of the Libyan Central Bank. The Security Council recalls the need for Member States to cease support to and official contact with parallel institutions that claim to be the legitimate authority but are outside of the Libyan Political Agreement, as stipulated by it.

"The Security Council welcomes the success of the first phase of the national conference process launched by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General with the organization of 42 meetings in 27 cities and towns in Libya.

"The Security Council welcomes the organization in a peaceful and organized process of the first municipal council elections since 2015 in the city of Zawiya, on 12 May 2018, which mark

the first of a series of municipal polls that will take place across the entire country.

"The Security Council welcomes the momentum generated by the international conference on Libya hosted on 29 May in Paris by President Emmanuel Macron under the auspices of the United Nations, in the presence of Faiez Serraj, President of the Presidency Council of Libya; Aguila Saleh, President of the House of Representatives; Khaled Al-Meshri, President of the High State Council; General Khalifa Haftar, Commander of the Libyan National Army; and representatives of the international community.

"The Security Council welcomes the commitment of these parties, as set out in the Paris declaration, to work constructively with the United Nations to organize credible and peaceful parliamentary and Presidential elections, and to respect the results of these elections.

"The Security Council recognizes the key role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in consulting with Libyan parties to set the constitutional basis for elections and to adopt the necessary electoral laws.

"The Security Council takes note of Libyan leaders' commitments to advancing these important steps within the timeframe set out in the Paris declaration and encourages all Libyans to work with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to implement them.

"The Security Council also welcomes the recognition of these parties of the importance of developing a constitutional basis for elections and reaffirms its support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General as he consults with the Libyan authorities on a proposal and timeline for adopting the constitution.

"The Security Council encourages all Member States to fully support the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and calls on Member States, in particular those in the region, to continue to urge all parties in Libya to engage constructively with the United Nations.

"The Security Council notes the commitment of the participants in the Paris conference to organizing an inclusive political conference to follow up on the implementation of the Paris declaration, under the auspices of the United Nations, and with respect for the timeframe and modalities determined by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

"The Security Council requests that the Secretary-General report as necessary, following consultations with the Libyan authorities, on support by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya for the next phases leading to national elections."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2018/11.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council expresses grave concern about the recent deterioration of the security situation in eastern Ukraine and its severe impact on the civilian population.

"The Security Council condemns continuous violations of the ceasefire regime, especially the use of heavy weapons prohibited by the Minsk Agreements, responsible for tragic deaths, including among civilians, and calls for the implementation of disengagement commitments and the immediate withdrawal of heavy weapons in accordance with relevant provisions of the Minsk Agreements.

"The Security Council welcomes the work of the United Nations agencies in order to address the tragic humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine and emphasizes the need for scaling up efforts to alleviate suffering of the civilian population affected by the conflict.

"The Security Council expresses its full support to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission and calls on all the parties to facilitate its work, including safe and secure access throughout Ukraine, to fulfil its mandate and guarantee the safety of its staff and protection of its equipment.

"The Security Council recalls its full support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, underlines the need for strict compliance with resolution 2202 (2015), which endorsed the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk Agreements, and encourages all the parties to recommit to the peace process and to implement all the measures agreed in the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group in order to achieve immediate progress in the implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

"The Security Council reaffirms its full support for resolution 2166 (2014) on the downing of flight MH-17."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2018/12.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8277

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8277th meeting

Wednesday, 6 June 2018, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Nebenzia	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Radomski
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mrs. Dickson
	United States of America	Ms. French

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

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18-17269 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, the Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Ukraine and Uruguay to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/532, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, the Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall first give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): The year 2018 marks the 50-year anniversary of a historic and tumultuous year in the history of many of our countries. The year 1968 heralded the arrival of a new generation, whose members marked their arrival loudly with protests and demonstrations, including the occupation of universities, aimed at challenging elites and changing the status quo. Many of the young leaders of those movements would go on to be leaders in their countries, bringing the "spirit of '68" to the organizations they once railed against. Since then new generations have been constantly challenging the status quo — just one reminder of how the power of youth can, and will, herald change.

During the open debate on youth, peace and security in April (see S/PV.8241), my delegation underlined the need to harness the power and leadership of youth as effective peacebuilders in all aspects of sustaining peace. I am therefore delighted to introduce, along with Peru, today's draft resolution on youth, peace and security (S/2018/532). The draft resolution builds on the ground-breaking resolution 2250 (2015)), so ably shepherded through the Security Council by Jordan in 2015. I would also like to acknowledge again today Jordan's continued leadership and championing of the youth, peace and security agenda at the United Nations. The draft resolution before the Council today builds on and complements resolution 2250 (2015). It does so in several ways.

First, it underlines the contribution that young people can make to peace and security if they are actively engaged and their knowledge, strengths and enthusiasm are unlocked and taken seriously.

Secondly, it recognizes the diversity of youth and the need to counter any stigmatization of youth as having different aspirations, opportunities and challenges. Every voice must be heard. The draft resolution also highlights the need to recognize the specific challenges and discrimination young women face.

Thirdly, it highlights that youth are a crucial part of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in advancing peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Fourthly, the draft resolution calls on both Member States and all United Nations entities to enhance the level and quality of dialogue with youth. That means inviting, including and listening to youth and youth-led civil society in our work.

I would like to thank all delegations for their positive contributions to the negotiations on the draft resolution. I want to pay a special word of thanks to the initiator and co-penholder, Peru, as well as to express my gratitude at the fact that so many countries decided to become co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

Today's draft resolution marks an advance in our collective determination to ensure that youth can play their rightful and necessary role in the work of the Security Council and in building peace across the world. We have heard their voices here in the Chamber, most recently in April. We should not only listen to them and heed them, but also learn from them.

Let me conclude with a quoteation from United States Senator Robert Fitzgerald Kennedy, who died 50 years ago today.

> "This world demands the qualities of youth: not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the life of ease."

We must never seek to quell those qualities of youth, either in the next generation of leaders or in ourselves.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte, d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2419 (2018).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2419 (2018), on youth, peace and security, which highlights the role youth are called upon to play in preventing and resolving conflicts. We would like to express our particular gratitude to the delegation of Sweden for joining us as co-penholder, as well as to all of the members of the Security Council for their support, spirit of compromise and active and constructive participation during the consultations and negotiations in the course of the past seven weeks.

We would also like to especially acknowledge Jordan's commitment to this issue and its initiative of bringing it to the Security Council through resolution 2250 (2015), adopted by the Council in December 2015. We would emphasize that young people are crucial to forging an inclusive vision of a shared future, a sine qua non for sustainable peace. The international community must maximize and harness the potential, commitment and resilience of young people in order to prevent and address conflicts.

Peru believes that the resolution that we have just adopted represents a major contribution to the work of the Security Council, in keeping with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We would emphasize the importance of ensuring follow-up on this issue in the context of the agenda of the Security Council. We therefore stress that the resolution we have just adopted calls on the Secretary-General to submit in 2020 a report on its implementation and that of its predecessor, resolution 2250 (2015).

We wish also to underscore the need to combat the stereotyping of young people, in particular insofar as it perpetuates forms of discrimination and violence targeting women. Women's empowerment and the promotion of gender equality are also key components of the positive role that young people can play in support of peace and security.

Finally, we would like to thank the countries that have expressed their support for this issue through their co-sponsorship of the draft that we submitted together with Sweden and to highlight that this reflects the broad support and commitment of the international community with respect to the youth, peace and security agenda.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): Let me first thank Peru and Sweden for their initiative to advance

the youth, peace and security agenda by proposing a draft resolution in follow-up to landmark resolution 2250 (2015). We commend both countries for the careful way in which they organized the process and also commend Jordan as the originator of resolution 2250 (2015).

I should like to make four points.

First, we co-sponsored the text of resolution 2419 (2018) because we welcome its substance and certainly also its unanimous adoption by the Council. We hope that the request contained therein for a follow-up report will ensure that this issue receives the attention that it deserves from the Council and the wider United Nations system. We welcome the fact that so many other member States also sponsored the text.

Secondly, on the need for a comprehensive approach, we appreciate the fact that the resolution recognizes the importance of a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution, peacekeeping and sustaining peace. We welcome the fact that the resolution reaffirms the important role that young people can play in these efforts. We welcome in particular the Council's intention to invite civil society, including youth-led organizations, as briefers here in the Council. We also welcome the encouragement to the Secretary-General to include in his reports the progress made towards the participation of young people in peace processes.

Thirdly, the importance of the progress study is clear. The study was exceptional; its methodology provided access and a voice to more than 4,000 young men and women who would not ordinarily have had the chance to participate face to face in this sort of policy-shaping process. It was this unique participatory approach that led the study to convincingly demonstrate how young people often feel unrepresented and excluded by the very institutions that are supposed to serve them. We recognize the positive reception of the progress study by an overwhelming majority of the membership of the United Nations, including most members of the Council, in the open debate held on 23 April (see S/PV.8241).

My fourth point concerns the importance of listening to today's youth. In negotiating this resolution, we tried to do our utmost to have young voices heard, including through active inputs from our own youth delegates, whom we commend for their contribution in this context. We express our hope that the Council will continue to listen to their voices and increase youth participation in issues of peace and security. The young people of the world have a legitimate desire to participate in the process of making decisions about their own future.

Ms. French (United States of America): The United States wishes to commend Peru and Sweden for their efforts to make sure that the Security Council recognizes the role of youth in issues of peace and security.

Resolution 2419 (2018), which we have just adopted, has a number of important elements. In particular, the United States appreciates that the Council will now recognize the role of education and sports in promoting tolerance and respect for others. Promoting peace and avoiding conflict starts with developing these values in our youth, who will be the next generation's peacemakers. Today's resolution goes a long way towards recognizing the steps that we need to take.

The United States regrets, however, that the resolution did not contain language on preventing violent extremism. This concept is not new, and it should not be controversial. The goal of the agenda on preventing violent extremism is to address the factors that lead some to turn toward violence, so that we stop the cycle of recruitment into terrorist organizations. The resolution was a missed opportunity to promote the fact that youth should be involved when Member States develop action plans to address the prevention of violent extremism. United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism are deeply involved in these efforts, and there is no reason why the Council should not be able to further recognize and support these critical efforts.

Finally, the Council should not be rolling back language on technology and the Internet. The resolution should have used the most recent language on the issue, as reflected in resolution 2396 (2017). Resolution 2396 (2017) should be our baseline going forward.

We wish once again to thank Peru and Sweden for their efforts, and we look forward to the Secretary-General's report on youth in 2020.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.